

THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF THE CHURCH
FOR A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

A Professional Project
Presented to the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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May 1979

This professional project, completed by

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*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer gratefully acknowledges
the guidance and assistance of

Dr. C. Dean Freudenberger

and

Dr. Joseph C. Hough

of the School of Theology at Claremont
whose critical comments and helpful suggestions
maximized this learning process

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ABSTRACT

The problem was determining ways the Church in North America could respond affirmatively toward enabling a just and sustainable society.

The methodology included reading current related material, attending the Habitat Forum at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, participating in strategy meetings with representatives of non-governmental organizations and participating in evaluative sessions with denominational representatives, and subsequent correspondence regarding options for church response to the issues raised at Habitat.

Habitat revealed humanity's most pressing problems to be scarcity of food, water, and shelter; environmental deterioration and exhaustion of non-renewable resources; inadequate medical, health and educational services; and overpopulation and unemployment. Habitat revealed these concerns to be organically related and suggested that only holistic and international approaches can enable their resolution.

Habitat revealed that much current technology is destructive to earth and its people and therefore non-sustainable, and that current relationships between the developed and developing nations are unjust and therefore equally non-sustainable. Finally, Habitat revealed that while some

technical and scientific problems persist, the primary obstacles to justice and sustainability are social, economic, and political in nature. Nations lack the political will to implement new designs and move in new directions

The changes required for a liveable future involve a radical change in values. Therefore, the Church has a contribution to make in the current crisis by providing the theological and metaphysical undergirding for a technology aligned with ecological realities and for international agreements which promise justice. A just and sustainable society is one characterized by fairness and equality in the distribution and use of the world's goods and resources by all the world's peoples in a manner consonant with ecologically-sound technology. It also requires a sensitivity to and preservation of those cultural and spiritual dimensions of life which make existence more than mere biological survival.

The Church enables change as it embodies new values in its own corporate life and institutional structures. This requires making social justice issues and global concerns primary rather than peripheral in its priorities. It requires new criteria for evaluating success other than those statistical analyses generally employed. The Church must critically evaluate existing programs and priorities as to whether they

facilitate or impede justice and sustainability. Such an evaluation may provide the necessary impetus for a new hermeneutic which will equip the Church to deal as effectively with systems and structures in the future as it has dealt with individual and familial concerns in the past. Such a shift moves the Church beyond the traditional, highly personalized religious function it has played in North American society in the past and into areas of political and social involvement. Certain programs within the United Church of Canada were reviewed and evaluated as representative of one denomination's attempts to move in this direction.

There appears to be a growing awareness within the churches that their role must increasingly include these socio-political dimensions. However, there is a noticeable lack of unanimity regarding methods of response, and there does not seem to be that sense of urgency required for radical change. Nevertheless, one contribution which the Church can make is to provide theological rationale and prophetic interpretation for those groups, ecclesiastical or otherwise, which are seeking to implement such a social order. The Church can create the theological basis for such a society by providing a world view which posits humanity as part of nature, rather than over-against nature. Disregard for nature and injustice towards peoples arise from the same

misconception. A Church which moves in this direction can radicalize humankind's self-understanding and thereby contribute toward a just and sustainable society.

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM

This professional project addresses the problem of how the Church in North America can most effectively enable the emergence of a just and sustainable global society.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

The importance of the problem lies first of all in a general lack of awareness of the nature of the issues confronting humankind today. The majority of the nations of the world are experiencing unprecedented scarcity of food and water, shelter, overpopulation, unemployment, and problems in education, medical and health services, environmental deterioration, and exhaustion of non-renewable resources.¹ Yet paradoxically most citizens of North America, Europe, and the Soviet Union are experiencing unprecedented affluence. Many nations in the northern hemisphere have reached such levels of consumption and waste that they are now called overdeveloped in contrast to the underdeveloped nations of the southern hemisphere. The quality of life in these richer nations actually

¹Barbara Ward, The Home of Man (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1976), pp. 2-10.

decreases with increased consumption.²

The basic problem therefore is not just that of scarcity of goods and resources but rather distribution of such goods and resources in a manner which provides for the basic needs of all the world's peoples. Maurice Strong, speaking at Habitat said that we now have the technical knowledge and ability to provide the basic needs of the earth's peoples but lack the political and social will to do so.³

The deeper issue then is the moral, social, political, and economic intransigence which perpetuates and even increases these problems. If the resolution of this deeper issue involves changing values, more equitable distribution of goods and resources and creating new structures and institutions in order that basic human needs can be met, then the Church definitely has a role to play in that process.

Secondly, the importance of the problem lies in widespread technological idolatry. Enrique Penalosa, speaking at Habitat, said that those who seek answers to

²Charles Birch, "Creation, Technology and Human Survival" (paper presented at the Nairobi Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Kenya, December 1, 1975), p. 5 (Mimeographed).

³Maurice Strong, "Energy Approaches for a Liveable Planet" (paper presented at Habitat Forum, Vancouver, June 2, 1976), pp. 11-12 (Mimeographed).

the problem of human settlements by some new "technological fix" are unrealistic.⁴ Charles Birch warns against that kind of mentality which believes that a "breakthrough a day keeps the crisis at bay."⁵ And Kenneth Galbraith has cautioned: "Our present method of underwriting technology is exceedingly dangerous. It could cost us our existence."⁶

These scientists are saying that we have developed a type of technology in the Western world (now global in its impact) which has short-range gains in terms of consumer goods and energy but long-range losses in terms of quality of life and ecological damage to air, land, and sea. What makes matters worse, we have come to rely on our technological gods as though they were able to deliver us out of the very mess they have brought us into. Birch argues that the issue is not a matter of technology or no technology: it is a matter of appropriate technology . . . technology which conforms to the life-sustaining realities inherent on planet Earth. He cautions that:

Science and technology in the service of unlimited growth may, for a time, stave off disaster, but only by delivering us into a fool's paradise from which there may be no escape. The technological fix becomes the technological trap. To act as if the cure

⁴Opinion expressed by Enrique Penalosa, Chairman of Habitat Forum and recorded in Habitat Forum News, Vancouver, June 2, 1976), pp. 11-12

⁵Birch, op. cit., p. 2.

⁶John Kenneth Galbraith, The New Industrial State (New York: New American Library, 1967), p. 8.

for all the ills of technology is more of the same technology is to follow the pied pipers of technology to destruction. I have two reasons for saying this. Firstly, science and technology will not always be able to pull a technological rabbit out of the hat to save us in the last minute. To pin one's ultimate faith on science and technology to provide for the future is cargo-cult thinking. Food, energy, and other resources from magical providers may never arrive. Secondly, technological rabbits of the modern kind tend to create more problems than they solve. They usually have voracious appetites and copious noxious excretions.⁷

Birch challenges the church to realize the moral nature of the crisis upon us, and to respond by providing an alternative view of reality which incorporates creativity and hope in contrast with the view dominant today which he sees as basically self-destructive. He says:

Total spiritual confusion prevails in the modern world about the relationship of man to nature in a technological culture. The churches and theologians intimidated by secular culture, seem to have left the task of interpreting man's relationship to nature to mechanistic science (which is a misinterpreted science) and materialistic philosophy. Because the churches in the rich world are part of the technological culture they find it difficult to be critical of it. The result is implicit acceptance of the dominant world view with no clear and united voice to the contrary.⁸

Thirdly, the importance of the problem lies in gaining an awareness of the meaning of faithfulness to Jesus Christ in these days. Martin Luther said, "If you

⁷ Birch, p. 6.

⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

preach the gospel in all aspects with the exception of the issues which deal specifically with your time you are not preaching the gospel at all."⁹ One of the paradoxes of our day is that there is a religious revival in North America which has as yet shown no concurrent commitment to social change.¹⁰ This is a phenomenon difficult to understand when the mandate upon the Church has always been to befriend the poor, liberate the imprisoned, heal the sick, feed the hungry, and care for the orphaned and oppressed. Martin Marty expresses the concern that this current form of religious renewal actually hinders and diminishes the social thrust of the gospel, reinforcing the existing political and social structures by making religion no more than a deeply personal, subjective experience.¹¹ Jim Wallis, editor of Sojourners magazine expresses a similar concern when he says, "The evangelical movement is presented in terms of what Jesus can do for me. It calls many to believe and few to obedience."¹² And Ronald Sider declares that there is something radically wrong with religion in

⁹Ronald Sider, Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1977), p. 58.

¹⁰"Back to that Oldtime Religion," Time (December 26, 1977), 52-28.

¹¹Ibid., p. 58.

¹²Ibid., p. 58.

America when persons with deep religious beliefs are no more concerned about assistance and development for the poor than are persons with little or no religious commitment.¹³ Sider argues that the traditional religious response that redeemed persons produce a redeemed society is nonsense because it fails to take seriously the radical nature of institutional and structural evil. Birch supports Sider's argument when he says:

It is now totally unintelligible for the churches to operate as though there is one plane called spiritual which is their area and another called the temporal which they can leave to others. This leads to the false belief that all they have to do is to change people and that changed people will change the world. It has not worked out that way. If life in a vast factory is dehumanising it is the factory that has to be changed. The redemption of people involves the redemption of the world they live in. The bonds that confine people all over the world are economic, political and technical as well as spiritual. The struggle for liberation is a struggle for economic, political, ecological and spiritual liberation. It is vital for the churches to be involved . . . in all these tasks. It is a cop-out for them to draw a distinction between the things that belong to Caesar and those that belong to God. Nothing belongs to Caesar, except Caesar's evil machinations.¹⁴

Christians need to realize that there is no such thing as political neutrality: to do nothing is to support the existing order of things in this world. In a letter

¹³Sider, p. 58.

¹⁴Birch, p. 6.

addressed to "North American Christians" the leaders of the Protestant Churches of Latin America reminded us (citizens of the United States and Canada) that we are all part of the same system; that the political and economic realities which bind them into locked relationships of dependency are the same ones that benefit us economically; that we prosper at their expense. They are asking that Christians in North America stand in solidarity with the cause of the poor in Latin America and seek to change those economic and political structures within our own nations which are determinative for so much of life within their nations.¹⁵ It is important that the Church state clearly its alignment with the poor and the oppressed and work to define those alignments behaviorally and operationally. Then when a person makes a commitment to Christ and the Church he or she will understand more clearly the concrete social and political implications inherent in that commitment.

Faithfulness to Jesus Christ requires more than just an alignment with the poor. It also requires a commitment to save the earth. Birch sees a connection between human justice and the renewal of the earth and between human injustice and environmental deterioration.

¹⁵"An Open Letter to North American Christians" from leaders of Protestant Churches in Latin America, October, 1976.

He says:

When people no longer care about people they no longer care about the world. The industrialist who pollutes the air and the kid who slashes the seats of the railway carriage both represent the same attitude. They are ignorant. They do not care about each other. They do not care about the world . . . It is a cock-eyed view that regards ecological liberation as a distraction from the task of liberation of the poor. One cannot be done without the other. It is time to recognize that the liberation movement is finally one movement. It includes women's liberation, men's liberation, the liberation of science and technology, animal liberation, plant liberation and the liberation of the air and the oceans, the forest, deserts, mountains and valleys.¹⁶

The prophet Hosea saw such a connection when he cried out, "When there is no fidelity, no tenderness, no knowledge of God in the country, only perjury and lies, slaughter, theft, adultery and violence, murder after murder, all who live in it pine away, even the wild animals and birds of heaven; the fish of the seas themselves are perishing."¹⁷ The prophets of doom today are not street-corner preachers but scientists of every discipline and ideology who are increasingly alarmed at the unprecedented abuse of the world's peoples and resources, and at our head-long dash toward self-destruction as a species.

Unfortunately theology has often legitimized just such abuse of both peoples and nature. Martin Marty points out that when the Civil Rights bills of 1965 were finally

¹⁶Birch, p. 9.

¹⁷Hosea 4:1-3. (Jerusalem Bible)

passed Senator Richard Russel said there would have been no chance for these bills to have passed had not the churches supported them; and then the senator asked: "But where were you for the last two hundred years?" Marty goes on to show that the senator, who was himself a southern Presbyterian, knew as well as anyone that the churches had given ideological support to slavery and segregation for hundreds of years.¹⁸

And what about the relationship of humankind to nature? John Cobb argues convincingly that the Genesis story of creation has frequently been interpreted in a manner which posits human beings over-against nature instead of a part of nature. He contends that the point of the creation narrative is to establish a division between God and the created order of which humanity is an integral part; and not between humanity and nature. It is this misunderstanding which has caused Western culture to relate to nature as though it were a force alien to humankind which must be dominated. Cobb recommends rather that we see ourselves as part of nature and realize that in the final analysis it is we who must align ourselves and our technology with the ecological realities and not vice-versa. We have

¹⁸ Martin E. Marty. The Search for a Usable Future (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 122.

emphasized the command to populate the earth and to subdue it without holding in balance the command to replenish it and to renew it. We have had a theology which cast us over-against nature and endorsed the technological view of nature dominant in our day. We must now find a theology which enables us to bring ourselves into alignment with those realities of nature which will ultimately determine whether or not human life will survive on this planet.¹⁹

THESIS

Christians in North America are becoming aware of these global issues and are seeking to find new ways of responding to them. It is the thesis of this doctoral project that a church membership which is more informed, politically and theologically, about such realities will respond affirmatively toward creating a more just and sustainable society.

The task of the Church in every generation is to interpret the gospel with relevance to the needs of its day. It is a difficult task because it is always a new task and one which requires that we walk unknown paths and sail uncharted waters. The task before the church

¹⁹John B. Cobb, Jr. Is It Too Late? (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 122.

today is to save the earth, literally! In one sense that has always been our task but the implications of that task have never before been so literally understood. It is not our task alone. It is to be done in concert with all the peoples of the earth. Frequently, however, we have acted as though it were not our task at all. Our concepts of salvation have often been partial and piecemeal, narrowly sectarian, or spiritualized outside the realm of history. Today, as never before we are beginning to understand the implications of St. Paul's comment about "the whole creation groaning in travail, waiting to be delivered from the bonds that bind her."²⁰ For too long we have thought that concerns of this kind belonged only to the scientist, the technician, the politician; but as E.F. Schumacher has pointed out, "we are suffering from a metaphysical, not just a technical deficiency."²¹ That deficiency to which Schumacher alludes is precisely the contribution which the Church can bring to the dialogue. The challenge before us is to create the metaphysical, philosophical, and theological undergirding which will enable humankind to imagine and to create those institutions and structures which produce a just and sustainable society.

²⁰Romans 8:22 (paraphrased)

²¹E.F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 92.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

This project will seek to demonstrate that the primary goal for humanity in the future must be the establishment of a just and sustainable society.

A just society has been defined as one where a sense of fairness prevails.²² John Rawls has developed a theory of justice which contains two basic criteria: Firstly, fairness means equality. A situation can only be considered fair or just when everyone is treated equally. And secondly, since absolute social and economic equality may turn out to be the disadvantage of everyone, Rawls introduces a second criterion: inequalities can be considered to be just only "if they result in compensating benefits for everyone, and in particular for the least advantaged members of society."²³ Inequality can only be justified if the least advantaged persons are better off than they would be in a situation of complete equality.

Charles Birch alters this definition of justice and adds the dimension of sustainability. Birch argues that the developed nations are not permitted to maintain wasteful levels of consumption simply because some technological benefits may accrue to the poorer nations in

²² John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 14-15.

²³ Ibid., p. 15.

the form of spin-offs or by-products. Instead he calls for a concept of justice which requires the de-development of the richer nations. According to his criterion of justice "any country would be overdeveloped whose standard of living was beyond the capacity of the world to generate for all its peoples."²⁴ He admits that his is a revolutionary ethical concept which demands not only a change in national goals but a "total restructuring of the international economic order."²⁵

Birch argues further that much more than injustice is at stake if we continue our current forms of technology. Rich nations are tied to a concept of progress which rests on unlimited growth in the production and consumption of goods.

Most people do not realize that society as it is now is not sustainable indefinitely. I do not simply mean that particular social structures will not survive. I mean that life itself is under threat, both the quality of life such as it is and sheer survival. Our minimal goals must be the removal of the threat to sheer survival and to the deterioration of the quality of life of the inhabitants of this earth, especially the poor. So a prior requirement of any global society is that it be so organised that the life of man and other living creatures on which his life depends can be sustained indefinitely within the limits of the earth. A second requirement is that it be sustained at a quality that makes possible fulfilment of human life for all

²⁴Birch, p. 15.

²⁵Ibid.

people. A society so organised to achieve both these ends we can call a sustainable global society in contrast to the present unsustainable global society.²⁶

A just and sustainable society, then, is one characterized by fairness and equality in the distribution and use of the world's goods and resources by all the world's peoples in a manner consonant with an ecologically-sound technology. It also requires a sensitivity to, and the preservation of those cultural and spiritual dimensions of life which make existence more than mere biological survival.

Another term which needs definition is the term political will. Pennock and Smith define political will as that set of desires and attitudes that sustain the balance of common loyalty and communal cleavage upon which government depends.²⁷ K.C. Wheare enumerates the following as elements which cohere in political will: the desire for military security and for independence of foreign powers, anticipation of economic benefits, a history of previous political associations, similarity of political institutions, and location in a common geographical neighborhood.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

²⁷ J. Roland Pennock, Political Science (New York: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 37-40.

²⁸ K.C. Wheare, Government by Committee (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), pp. 37-40.

The concept of political will seems to have derived from Rousseau's social contract and from Green's common good. Green defined the State as an institution for the promotion of the common good and defined political will as "that impalpable congeries of the hopes and fears of a people bound together by common interests and sympathy."²⁹

From these definitions it is apparent that political will requires cohesiveness and similarity of experiences. To some degree it also requires consent. It is not a single entity but rather it contains a conglomerate of factors, both historic and current which effect the political process. A nation's self-image and expectations are also highly determinant factors. Finally, political will is always contextual: it is an attempt to determine the will of the people with regard to a current, concrete situation. Therefore for the purposes of this project political will is defined as those factors which influence the establishment of political priorities for attaining a more just and sustainable society.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this project involved a review

²⁹ J.P. Plamenatz, Consent, Freedom and Political Obligation (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 181.

of documents, books, and papers prior to attending the Habitat Forum. It also involved consultation with various groups and organizations: the Alberta Committee on International Agencies, the Calgary Inter-Faith Social Action Committee, the United Nations Chapter in Calgary, the Arusha Cross-Cultural Development Centre, the Church in Society Division of the Alberta Conference of the United Church of Canada and the social action committee of my own congregation. Furthermore, it involved attendance at two sessions of pre-Habitat meetings for Alberta Non-Governmental Organizations.

During the two weeks of the Habitat Forum I attended all the plenary sessions, and those lectures, seminars and exhibits which dealt primarily with rural-urban migration, land use, and China. I also attended the daily de-briefing sessions which Canadian Non-Governmental Organizations had with their official government representatives to the Conference.

Since the Forum I have attended two all day follow-up sessions with the official United Church delegates to Habitat and have subsequently submitted two reports to my denominations headquarters: a five page letter, and a twenty-page document of my reflections on Habitat with suggestions for church response. This paper was also submitted to my academic advisor at Claremont as part of

a directed studies program, and serves as a primary document to this presentation. I have continued to review books and articles related to global concerns and church response; and to dialogue with denominational officials regarding ways the United Church of Canada might respond more effectively. Hopefully, the proposals emerging from this project will be of value to the church in North America generally, and to the United Church of Canada particularly.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This project is both a critique of, and a challenge to, the church in North America: its individual members and its corporate institutional structures. However, because of its brevity a detailed analysis and criticism is not attempted. Nevertheless, broad policy changes are recommended which may significantly affect all levels of church life. Specific recommendations are made in terms of theological education, especially education for social change.

Basically, however this paper deals with the church at the regional and local levels and suggests ways the local congregation can bring about an increased awareness of, and response to global concerns both within its own congregational life and within its community. Some education-action groups which are experiencing success are studied as models for effecting positive social change.

RELATED MATERIALS

In Global Research Barnet and Muller exposed the organic relationship between the poverty of third world nations and the superabundance of wealth in the developed nations by demonstrating that the multi-nationals and their elitist-puppets in the poorer nations control the flow of money into and out of these countries and maintain an almost monopolistic control over the industry, agriculture, and production within these countries.

Robert McAfee Brown in Religion and Violence analyzes historic colonialism, and the neo-colonialism which continues to stifle the growth of third world nations. This perpetuates an institutional violence which is in some ways more destructive to these peoples than the more overt kinds of violence with which we usually acquaint the term "violence."

In Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire develops an educational model for political conscientization. In this way he seeks to resolve the contradiction between the rich and the poor. Otherwise every new revolution only perpetuates a new oppressor class and a new class of those oppressed. Freire argues that the rich stand in just as great a need to be liberated from their riches as do the poor from their poverty.

Gutierrez points out in A Theology of Liberation that the social and political dimensions of the gospel

are not by-products of, or adjuncts to, the gospel; but are synonymous with the gospel. Salvation means justice and brings justice. The Marxist understanding of praxis and the movement of history are not seen as contradictions to Christian Faith but rather as a process to which the Christian Faith gives the goal and content. God aligns Himself with the poor in history and it is through the poor that liberation comes.

The Limits of Growth is a book which deals with environmental breakdown and social disintegration. The Club of Rome ran computer print-outs based on a multiplicity of information related to non-renewable resources, overpopulation, and global problems. These projections indicated that if current trends of consumption continue unabated in the industrialized nations world-wide famine and other social and ecological disasters are inevitable.

Stan Mooneyham in What do you say to a hungry world? deals with some political and economic aspects of hunger. He calls for a revolution in our attitudes and images as well as in our actions. He attacks the illusions Americans have about themselves as a "generous nation" and denounces those corporate structures which systematically perpetuate poverty around the world.

Robert Rhodes edits Imperialism and Underdevelopment: A Reader, which reviews the historical development of

American imperialism in underdeveloped countries and explains how United States capital controls most economic development in foreign countries. These controls are maintained through the establishment of dictators or puppet regimes which are loyal to American interests.

Justice Not Charity by Doug Roche is a book which documents Canadian involvement in foreign aid programs. It reveals that most "aid" programs perpetuate economic dependency, and redound to the economic benefit of the donor nation not the receiver nation. He calls for radical changes and lists forty-five ways Canadian citizens can effect change in government policies and personal lifestyles.

In his book, Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger, Ronald Sider establishes the biblical basis for feeding the hungry of the earth. He calls for repentance in personal and national priorities in light of the pressing needs of two-thirds of the world's peoples. According to Sider, the feeding of the hungry must become a number one priority for Christians who take the gospel seriously.

In Revolutionary Writings, Camilo Torres, a Roman Catholic priest from Columbia, South America, shares his conviction that "social concern coalesces perfectly with Christian concern." His belief that "love must be effective to be Christian" led him to armed insurrection in the face

of the futility of passive resistance.

Bishop Vaughn in The Expectations of the Poor, seeks to work out the rudimentary constructs of a theology of development. Using guidelines established by the Department of the Church and Society of the World Council of Churches and reflections from Moltmann and Alves he establishes the theological basis for the Christian mission in relation to world development issues.

In The Home of Man, Barbara Ward captures the major issues of the Habitat Conference and of our global crises today. She points out that the underlying causes are not technological or scientific but political and social. She calls for a metaphysical and spiritual renewal, reminding us that what is lacking most in the development crisis is a value orientation which will help us to transcend our national and ideological differences in order to save the earth.

In his book Is It Too Late? John Cobb analyzes the current ecological damage and suggests that it is indeed too late unless we can create a new theological understanding of humanity as part of nature instead of over-against nature. He traces historically, philosophically, and theologically, the metaphysical basis underlying our basically destructive and ecologically insensitive technology. Without a new appreciation of nature, humanity's place within it, and a realignment

of our technology with ecological realities he warns of irreversible catastrophes.

In his paper, "Creation, Technology and Human Survival," biologist Charles Birch warns that the survival of life itself is at stake if we perpetuate our current forms of technology. He suggests a new technology which includes those moral guidelines essential for a just society and those biological and ecological guidelines essential for a sustainable one. He demonstrates that justice and sustainability are inseparably linked together and that only a technology which reflects both will preserve the earth as an inhabitable planet.

David M. Paton edited Breaking Barriers, the reports of the World Council of Churches Assembly in Nairobi, 1975. These reports reflected the thinking of this international body in areas of development, liberation, and theological education for social justice. Section IV: Education for Liberation and Community: Section V: Structures of Injustice and Struggles of Liberation: and Section VI: Human Development: Ambiguities of Power Technology and Quality of Life, were particularly relevant to this project.

Paul Abrech edits Faith, Science and the Future, the preliminary papers for the 1979 World Council of Churches Conference to be held at M.I.T. These papers present an update of the current debate on global concerns from

scientific, technological, and theological perspectives. Both implicit and explicit recommendations emerge for the establishing of a just, participatory and sustainable global society. Particular emphasis is placed on the nuclear energy debate, food and resources, environment, and the political and economic use of technology.

In Christian Responsibility in a Hungry World, Dean Freudenberger and Paul Minus, Jr., state the need of the earth's hungry for food, give the causes, and make concrete suggestions as to ways Christians can respond. Examples are given of ways churches and communities are already responding. Awareness of the need and persistent commitment toward its resolution seem to be the largest obstacles in mobilizing the churches for action.

A Socio-Theology of Letting-Go, by Dr. Marie Augusta Neal is a sociological critique of the Church in North America today. Neal says that objectively speaking-- by analyzing what systems and structures in our society the Church implicitly and explicitly supports -- the Church is currently failing in its mission to the poor of the earth and is functioning primarily as a civil religion. She calls for a theology of relinquishment which means that rich nations let go of those resources and prerogatives which rightfully belong to the poor.

What I hope to add to this dialogue is a perspective which enables members of the United Church of Canada to see third world issues as a primary area for the embodiment of Christian discipleship today. Essentially, that means that missional activity in our day involves confrontation with, and transformation of, existing structures and institutions in order to attain a just and sustainable society. Third world issues are inseparable from the salvation of the whole earth. Economic injustice and environmental deterioration are tied together: we can't have one without the other. We must have a world that is both just and sustainable or we will have neither.

OUTLINE

Chapter Two reviews the Habitat Conference on Human Settlements and the conclusions which emerged. It clarifies the nature of the problem and suggests the direction in which the solution lies.

Chapter Three explores the implications emerging from Habitat for the Church. This is a pivotal chapter because it adds a theological and institutional dimension to the problem.

Chapter Four introduces biblical and theological perspectives which assist us in re-ordering our priorities and re-aligning our programs toward a just and sustainable

society. This chapter moves us from "what is" into "what is possible."

Chapter Five presents ways and means of implementing the priorities and changes recommended in chapter Four. It includes concrete proposals for individual and corporate action within the Church and the community which may produce political and social change.

Chapter Six summarizes the problem, states the conclusions reached, and determines whether or not those conclusions support the original thesis.

Chapter 2

HABITAT

I do not personally believe that life itself will be extinguished, despite the perils of the nuclear age and the myriad other assaults on our ecological support system. Sooner or later the necessary decisions will be taken. What is at issue now is the degree of human suffering and environmental damage that will be the consequence of unnecessary delay, and also whether the degree of delay will not steadily diminish the chances that change will occur within a context of freedom, human diversity, and tolerance.¹

Enrique Penalosa
Secretary-General, United Nations
Conference on Human Settlements

Habitat, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, must be seen in the context of the other conferences which have been held by the United Nations in this current decade of development. Previous conferences have been

Stockholm	-	Environment	-	1972
Bucharest	-	Population	-	1974
Rome	-	Food	-	1974
Caracas	-	Sea	-	1975
Mexico City	-	International Woman's Year	-	1975

Paralleling these conferences have also been the meetings of the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development

¹Opinion expressed by Enrique Penalosa, "Introduction," in Barbara Ward, The Home of Man (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. viii.

and the seventh special session of the General Assembly to weigh changes in the world economic order and in the organizations of the international community.

Habitat was the largest and possibly most crucial of all the United Nations gatherings to date. It grew out of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Environmental problems of human settlements were on the agenda at Stockholm, but inasmuch as they were on among many pressing matters to be dealt with, the specific problems related to human settlements could not be completely considered there. Hence, Habitat was called to deal specifically with settlement issues.

Habitat was actually not one but two conferences. The official conference was held in the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in downtown Vancouver and involved 4,500 official delegates and advisors from 134 nations attending. The second conference was held a few miles away from the centre of the city near the University of British Columbia campus and was called the Habitat Forum. A total of 3,500 persons attended one or more of the workshops, speeches, and demonstrations during the two weeks of the Forum activities. Some of the recommendations that filtered through the Forum eventually made their way to the official conference.

There were nine basic areas of discussion and study open to the participants of the Forum. These were:

1. National Human Settlement Policies
2. Participation in Planning and Implementation
3. Human Settlements and the New International Economic Order
4. Human Settlements in Rural Areas
5. Community Involvement in Improving the Quality of Life
6. Land Use and Ownership
7. User-Oriented Settlements Technologies
8. The Man-Made and the Natural Environment
9. Social Justice and the Question of Differing Values and Cultures²

The term "human settlement" means more than simply a collection of houses or shelters in which people live. It encompasses the totality of our lives together -- the ways we live, and the systems we create. Residential and commercial facilities, utilities and sanitation arrangements, modes of transportation and communication, commercial and social services, and institutions of culture, society and government -- all are integral parts of a community or settlement. The existence and the particular arrangement of these elements directly affects the quality of life of the country as a whole.³ With this definition in mind it

²Habitat Forum News (Vancouver, March 1, 1976), p. 1.

³Habitat Forum News (Vancouver, July 1, 1975), p. 2.

is easy to see that while Habitat was ostensibly a conference on human settlements it was such only in the larger sense, in the sense that the total environment impinges on human-kind's habitats. Therefore, it would be enlightening to say that the Habitat Forum also dealt with armaments, and the nuclear energy threat to the environment; rural-urban migration, and its potential impact on cities of the future; food scarcity, land use, and national settlement policies; environmental deterioration; and the rapid expiration of non-renewable resources.

What emerged from Habitat was first of all an awareness of the scale of the problems confronting humankind today. Nowhere was this more evident than in the discussions on the problems of the cities and rural-urban migration. Obviously, there have been problems with rural-urban migration for hundreds of years. Certainly, there has been overcrowding in our cities for equally as long. But what is new -- what was not there before -- is the evolution of cities of over a million inhabitants. There are 191 today whereas there were only 11 at the turn of the century, and if present trends continue there will be 273 by 1985. (147 of these will be in underdeveloped nations - nations which are least prepared and equipped to cope with such proliferation). In 1950 there were two cities with populations of over ten million persons but there will be 17 by

1985 and 10 of these will be in developing countries. The problems precipitated by such a mass migration to the cities staggers the imagination: food, energy, shelter, education, medical and social services, clean water and sanitation. Mexico is illustrative of the kind of unprecedented and uncontrolled growth which is occurring in many countries of the third world. Thirty million of Mexico's sixty-five million citizens are under fourteen years of age. Twelve million persons live in Mexico City making it the biggest slum in the world. In 1900 ninety percent of the population lived in the rural areas; now fifty percent live in the cities and by the year 2000 it is estimated that eighty percent of the people will live in the cities. This in a country where the majority of the homes still have no built-in drainage, bathroom, or electricity.⁴

Secondly, there emerged from Habitat an increased awareness of the interrelatedness of the problems confronting humankind. By the end of the conference it became evident that the nations of the earth have been pursuing piecemeal solutions to their current problems as though these problems were isolated entities and not organically related. Ironically, this piecemeal approach to problem-solving frequently compounds the problem because in many

⁴Arturo Gonzalez, "Mexican Time Bomb," Maclean's (June 12, 1978), 24-38.

cases one nation's solution increases another nation's problem. Without a global perspective, without a willingness to subjugate national priorities to international necessities, lasting solutions will not emerge.

The land use issue is a case in point. The Vancouver Symposium, twenty-six experts in areas related to global concerns who met prior to and during Habitat, adamantly insisted that the number one priority for governments is control over land use. Land use and the profits derived therefrom must be part of an overall national settlements plan. Land speculation, the misuse and abuse of arable land, the boom and bust exploitation, must cease; and ecologically balanced policies must prevail if earth is to remain an inhabitable planet. Land must be seen as a public resource, not as a private commodity.

As Barbara Ward has pointed out, land use planning cannot be less than nationwide. In fact, there are serious international implications in land use issues. In her book, The Home of Man, she asks the question:

What scale of agricultural community do developed nations require in new conditions of possible world scarcity? If one thing is certain in the next quarter century, it is that the world's need for food will inexorably increase. In developed countries, in the last fifty years, the sheer availability of supplies made glut, not shortage, the main problem. This led to notable casualness in the transfer of even prime agricultural land to other purposes -- roads, airports, suburbs. Yet countries like Britain or Japan

provide less than half their own food and have long lived on the assumption of cheap world supplies of grain. So have the Dutch. However, the emergence of the Soviet Union, and possibly later, of China as major competitors for what could be fairly static grain reserves must surely compel some drastic rethinking of the role of land use planning in preserving or releasing land for the farmers.⁵

Without a land use program which is nation-wide in scope, international in perspective, ecologically sound, and agriculturally balanced, it is probably inevitable that land speculation and current forms of development will continue unabated, using no other criteria than short term economic gain as its yardstick for success. Is this just or right in a hungry world?

Thirdly, there emerged from Habitat an awareness of the injustice inherent in the current economic relationship between the developed and developing nations. As the conference progressed it became increasingly clear that those nations which are already the most disadvantaged in terms of resources, survival skills, and sustenance are the very ones which will become increasingly impoverished if current patterns of exploitation continue.

When these poorer nations, collectively called the Group of 77, walked into the Habitat Conference on Tuesday, June 8, and changed the agenda, insisting that trade

⁵Ward, pp. 97-98.

agreements and more just economic arrangements were the real issues which needed to be discussed, they were not "playing politics" with the conference: they were simply sharing their desperation at the plight of their peoples. Habitat revealed quite clearly that there is an organic connection between their poverty and our wealth; between their scarcity and our superabundance.

But Habitat revealed something even more shocking than this. Habitat revealed that these forms of injustice and inequities need not exist. Current trade agreements and patterns of international economics can be changed if the developed nations are willing to permit change to occur. Maurice Strong spoke to these issues in his Habitat paper, "Energy Approaches for a Liveable Planet."

My great concern is that our planning processes have become too narrowly technical, too willing to accept past trends as the guide to the future, and too ready to accept what men do in response to social and economic pressures as some kind of inevitable and natural choice. Only if we have the vision and courage to see the limitations of the systems within which men live, only if we can understand that the interplay of political forces and the pressures of the market economy are the outgrowth of past human choices and not some expression of divine will, can we have the chance of resisting the course of development which now carries us toward social disintegration if not ecological disaster.⁶

Similarly, Enrique Penalosa, Secretary General of Habitat, challenged non-governmental organizations to help

⁶ Maurice Strong, "Energy Approaches for a Liveable Planet" (paper presented at Habitat Forum, Vancouver, June 2, 1976) p. 24. (mimeographed).

in creating a global revolution in human attitudes so that all societies can begin assuring at least the minimal needs of every person on earth. He said:

Those who seek the answers to the problems of human settlements by some new technological fix are unrealistic. We need political and social decisions at the international and national levels to implement methods and solutions which are already available. The political will simply does not exist to put into practice available processes which could create better living, working, and health conditions for the majority of the earth's people.⁷

What did Habitat say? Primarily Habitat said that what is lacking today is not technical skills, or scientific knowledge, but political will. Thomas Blair, writing in the British magazine FUTURES expressed it this way: "It is now much clearer, after Habitat, that human settlements issues are not really about housing and technology, but about politics and social change."⁸

⁷Opinion expressed by Enrique Penalosa, Chairman of Habitat Forum and recorded in Habitat Forum News (Vancouver, June, 1976), 6.

⁸Albion R. Wright, "Habitat," Exchange I, 2 (Winter-Spring, 1977), 7-8.

Chapter 3

IMPLICATIONS OF HABITAT FOR THE CHURCH

If two-thirds of the earth's peoples are deprived of the essentials of life (adequate food and water, clothing and shelter, education and health care) then the role of the Church is to assist in enabling them to receive these essentials. And if the enabling process requires change in our current forms of technology and political and economic structures then the Church has a role to play in transforming existing technologies, governments, and economics in order that a just and sustainable society emerges.

Habitat clearly demonstrated that by every humane and Christian standard two-thirds of the earth's peoples do currently exist in sub-standard conditions of squalor, hunger, and deprivation. Habitat also demonstrated that the reasons for these conditions are primarily political and social. The current dominant political and economic structures of our world prohibit the sharing of the earth's resources in a manner which would alleviate the causes of poverty. Finally, Habitat demonstrated that a sustainable global social order would also require alternate forms of technology which were ecologically sound and which were based primarily on renewable energy sources.

The first and perhaps most obvious implication of

Habitat then for the Church in North America is that we have not made the establishment of a just and sustainable global society as reflected in basic human needs a primary concern. Our programs, priorities, and budgets do not reflect a response commensurate with the severity of the needs. Perhaps this is because we have seen ourselves primarily as an institution called to fulfill a narrowly defined "religious" function in society. Such a limited understanding of our function would indeed be unfortunate inasmuch as the very term RELIGIO means to rebind humankind to the cosmos, to heal the pervasive alienation, to bring healing and wholeness into the social order.¹

Another explanation which is perhaps more plausible is that because Christians in the Western world have their own basic survival needs adequately met they tend to "spiritualize" the teachings of the scriptures with regard to poverty. It is a most basic teaching of the scriptures however that faith in God manifests itself through caring action toward the poor. When John the Baptist was asked the meaning of repentance: "What ought we to do?" he replied: "Share with the poor!"² Jesus quotes Isaiah 61:1-2 to epitomize

¹Robert K. Greenleaf, Servant Leadership (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 80, 218.

²Luke 3:10-11 (paraphrased)

the ministry he intends:

The spirit of the Lord is upon me;
therefore, he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives,
Recovery of sight to the blind
and release to prisoners
To announce a year of favor from the Lord.³

The judgment of the nations in Matthew 25 is based upon their response to concrete survival needs of the poor: food, water, shelter, clothing, companionship.⁴ The writer of the First Epistle of John makes it unequivocally clear that love of God is manifested in caring for the needy.⁵ All of the above indicate that the gospel is good news in concrete terms: the poor have their needs met.

Karl Barth in his essay on "Poverty" points out that the scriptures clearly reveal that God is on the side of the poor, defends their rights against the rich, and commands the rich to share with the poor. He says . . . "the Bible is on the side of the poor, the impecunious and the destitute. He whom the Bible calls God is on the side of the poor. Therefore the Christian attitude to poverty can consist only of a corresponding allegiance."⁶

³ Luke 4:18-19 (NAB)

⁴ Matthew 25:31-46.

⁵ I John 3:17.

⁶ Karl Barth, Against the Stream (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), pp. 244-45.

Marie Augusta Neal maintains that the Church forfeits its heritage and becomes no more than civil religion when it fails to stand prophetically with the poor against injustices and inequities. In speaking to these issues she says:

When conditions like this obtain and an established religion treats them as non-existent and of no concern of "ours," or as too enormous for us to contend with, or gives priority to other programs and themes, then the religion has become merely civil and not religious. Because truly religious activities or worship, service and community-making are oriented to the process of humanization, a test of the truth of priestly and prophetic functions can be found in the level of human development attained by peoples, having regard for the existing potential for human development. Religious exhortation of people to raise their minds and hearts "above bread-and-butter concerns" and to focus on "the aspirations of the human soul" and on promises of "salvation beyond the frustrations of human finitude," and the promotion of a "purely spiritual" salvation -- such emphasis should be recognized as the class-conditioned values of the affluent for whom physical subsistence is no longer problematic. The poor are not naive in dreaming of a heaven that is quite material, which accurately reflects where they actually stand in the order of humanization. For them any other aspiration would be irrational, not spiritual. Established religions in affluent societies that have not recognized this fact or, having recognized it, still opt for the "purely spiritual" function are merely civil; for such an option, though it provides for the powerful and kept classes, is exploitative of the poor.⁷

Neal continues her argument, maintaining that sociologically it is possible to determine whether the Church is functioning as a prophetic force for the poor or as a civil religion endorsing the existing order:

⁷Marie Augusta Neal, A Socio-Theology of Letting Go (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 20-1.

If . . . in a world in which unjust conditions are in fact manifest . . . a distinction is demonstrated between, on the one hand, a religious practice significantly related to the denial of such conditions and, on the other, a religious practice related to the recognition of such conditions, and if there exists a high probability that the relationships are not spurious of the result of chance, then there is reason to believe that religious practice closely tied to the maintenance of existing social arrangements is merely civil.⁸

Similarly, Dorothee Soelle argues that there is no such thing as an apolitical theology or "pure" gospel. All theologies and expressions of faith must be viewed in the context of what sociological conditions they support, reinforce, or challenge.⁹

There seems to be sufficient evidence today to indicate that, avowed goals to the contrary, the Church in North America has been primarily providing a strictly "religious" function as defined by our society and to that extent has been a merely civil religion. Whether it intends to or not the Church has increasingly aligned itself not with the poor of the earth but with the "powers that be." So much so that David Moberg can write

There is no clear line between the spheres of governmental and religious action in America. The "wall of separation" is no longer . . . a distinct partition separating the two. They are so interrelated in their impact upon the lives of citizens that they can be considered separate only in principle.¹⁰

⁸Ibid., p. 21.

⁹Dorothee Soelle, Political Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), pp. 75-77.

¹⁰David Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 372.

There is no evidence to indicate that the same statement would not also hold true for the Church in Canada.

Moberg continues

When the church effectively influences government, it may become a revolutionary force in society. Biblical teachings about social, political, and economic relationships have many radical social implications. They have contributed to gradual or sudden modifications of many social institutions and community conditions.

The impact of religion on government is not always functional, however. When a church is identified with national institutions and values, overweening confidence in the rightness of political goals can lead it to perpetuate tyranny and support other evils in the name of "Christian civilization," the American Way of Life, or moral absolutes.¹¹

Moberg's concern that the Church may overly identify with nationalistic goals and aspirations is echoed by Martin Marty. Marty traces this inherent tendency of the Church to identify with the nation all the way back to biblical times and concludes

Protestantism responds to a Scripture which in the one half of its dialectic asks men to support the "powers that be." The other half calls for men to obey God rather than men; to speak of God's righteousness and justice at any expense. Protestants have found it easier or more profitable to listen to the first half of its message than to the second, at the expense of the realization of a single people of God.¹²

The Church will never be able to plead the cause of the poor effectively or assist the poor concretely in establishing those structures and systems which will provide

¹¹Ibid., p. 374.

¹²Neal, p. 45.

a more just and sustainable society if its own vision and commitment is limited by nationalistic goals, values, and priorities. The Church, by definition stands over-against its cultures, as well as within it, in order to bring a critical presence into local, regional, national, and international decision-making. It cannot do that if it accepts a priori the economic and political presuppositions of any social order.

It is this concern which prompts Neal to conclude that if the current economic systems of this world do not enable the poor to obtain the basic necessities of life then the systems need to be changed, rather than blaming the victims for their own poverty.¹³ Based on the Old Testament principle of the year of Jubilee, Neal calls for a theology of relinquishment for the rich nations which will correspond with a theology of liberation for the poor nations. The gospel mandate requires that the poor take what is rightfully theirs and that the rich relinquish it. Sin in this context is retaining that which the poor need for their survival.¹⁴

Neal is neither naive about the complexities of contemporary international economics nor optimistic about

¹³Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 107.

the developed nations adopting a program of radical changes based on a theology of relinquishment. Her concern is not to develop a model for a new economic order; rather, her concern is that the Church in North America come to understand itself as more than a mouthpiece for the existing order. Unless and until it begins to use biblical criteria for establishing its own priorities and for judging the systems and structures of the current social order it will remain for all intents and purposes a civil religion. To the degree that it has ignored the kinds of issues raised at Habitat, relegated them outside the realm of its judgment and concern, personalized response, or acquiesced to existing evils through silence, the Church has been apostate!

The value of Neal's contribution is that she enables a criteria for judging the faithfulness of the Church in North America in the light of current global needs. That criteria is this: to what degree do our programs, priorities and politics ameliorate the plight of the poor of the earth. Such a standard must undergird both the Church's criticism of itself as well as the society in which it exists.

Today we are called to a new approach to an age-old problem. It is a call to work on eliminating the causes of poverty rather than merely alleviating its results. This stance makes unambiguous what was unambiguous in Gospel days, that is, that the interests of the poor have primacy in Christian service. Conversion consists in taking this step to change our allegiance and to choose this stance. This is the issue

around which there is polarization in the churches, between those who would perpetuate and those who would eliminate the institutions that cause poverty.¹⁵

The first implication of Habitat for the Church then is that we have not made the meeting of basic human needs a high priority. We have not responded to the radical demands for justice in the social order as expressed in both the Old and New Testaments, and more recently in papal decrees and ecumenical documents.

While some of the reasons for this may rest in our acquiescence to the status quo or in an inappropriate and uncritical allegiance to nationalistic goals and aspirations other reasons seem to be those inherent in the very nature of the religious enterprise in North America. Because the Church, like any other institution in our society is to a large degree the product of our society we have accepted uncritically those models of growth dominant in our society and by implication the values and presuppositions inherent in those models. (These models are primarily quantitatively oriented, economically determined, and self-perpetuating.) The Church, then, by the very nature of its institutional life frequently finds itself implicitly reinforcing those very values and presuppositions in our society which it explicitly denounces. While the Church criticizes society

¹⁵Ibid., p. 89.

for using quantitative and economic criteria as the measure of "success" (i.e. numbers of units produced, profit derived therefrom, investment capital available, personal income as indicative of individual success, etc.) the Church itself employs precisely such criteria for evaluating its own "success" as an institution: namely, increase in membership, rise in financial contributions, building programs, salary increases for "successful" ministers, accumulation of investment capital, etc. Because of this there exists a mutually reinforcing relationship between the Church and society. While avowed goals appear distinct, the criteria for evaluating success are identical. This has permitted a collusion of values at the implicit level. The criteria used for evaluating "growth," "progress," and "success" in the realm of religion reinforces and is mutually reinforced by those very growth criteria which undergird our current economic and industrial structures.

This leads to a second and less obvious implication of Habitat for the Church: we have been implicitly reinforcing those values and presuppositions which have dominated our economics and technology and which have led us toward an increasingly unjust and non-sustainable global society.

It is important that we understand, as Schumacher has pointed out that "a system" carries with it certain inherent values so that:

although it is society that produces the production system, once a particular system has come into existence it begins to mould society: it, as it were, insists that the members of society respect the immanent logic of the system and adapt to it by accepting its implicit aims as their own. Man then becomes the captive of the system whether he approves of its aims or not, AND HE CANNOT EFFECTIVELY ADOPT DIFFERENT AIMS OR VALUES UNLESS HE TAKES STEPS TO ALTER THE SYSTEM OF THEIR PRODUCTION.¹⁶ (capitals his)

Schumacher maintains that the current "system" under which we live can "produce growth but not justice; it can improve the quality of goods but not the quality of people; it can find money for the development of Concordes, moon rockets, and heart transplants but not for housing, public transport, school or hospital building . . . it produces private affluence and public squalor." He concludes that any re-setting of aims and objectives implies a re-setting of the "system."¹⁷

What are those characteristics which Schumacher finds so destructive in our current "system?" He is concerned about the dehumanization which occurs in a concept of efficiency which relates to production and profit but not to quality of life.

From the point of view of this kind of material efficiency, there always appear to be . . . "economics of scale," and every increase in scale offers opportunities for the introduction of more specialized equipment, while at the same time forcing the worker into

¹⁶E.F. Schumacher, The Age of Plenty (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1974), p. 14.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 12.

a greater division of labour. So the production units become even bigger, more complex, more expensive, and also in a special sense more violent.¹⁸

Professor Theodor Leuenberger in his "Plea for a Post-Modern Society" maintains that the world of technological production is dominated by the superstition that only that which can be quantified is "real;" and that this

concentration on quantifying analysis has caused the present assymetry in our development, and the backwardness in our moral and political consciousness . . . Modern society is characterized by a type of rationality which subjects all of life to precise quantifiable criteria.¹⁹

Another criterion which Leuenberger finds descriptive of society today is the term maximization: the tendency to make everything "bigger and better, stronger and faster," as though there were some inherent value in maximization itself. He says that Keynes accurately predicted the essence of bureaucratic structures when he said that "they would view as a dead operation a stable balance system which does not lead to expansion or more output."²⁰

But how does the church reinforce these values? Bearing in mind the above characteristics of a technologically dominated society, it is most revealing to read a book like Peter Wagner's Your Church Can Grow, a "church growth" manual.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁹Theodor Leuenberger, "Plea for a Post-Modern Society" in Paul Albrecht, ed. Faith Science and the Future (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1978), p. 227.

²⁰Ibid.

Wagner maintains that the primary purpose of a church (i.e. congregation) is to spawn other churches; that it must be big enough to provide a variety of programs and the bigger the better (maximization); that its growth will be directly related to its planning for expansion and new congregations; that it will grow in proportion to its appeal to a homogeneous group of persons - racially, socio-economically, and educationally (market segment); and that it will grow in ratio to its providing a purely "religious" function (specialization) by which he means that it emphasizes evangelism, with some social service and no social action. In fact, Wagner warns that an inverse relationship exists between social action and church growth: increased involvement in political and social issues will cause a decrease in membership and income! Consciously or unconsciously, Wagner is sacramentalizing those very traits and characteristics which are most descriptive of our society's technological and economic world view. He does not seem to realize that equating "church growth" with numerical and financial increases and building programs has little to do with a biblical understanding of the Church and much to do with our society's current equation for "success."²¹

²¹Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow (Glendale, California: Regal Books, 1977), pp. 110-134.

The "church growth movement" may be an exaggerated example but the point remains nevertheless that the Church in North America has accepted those criteria of growth espoused by our technological society as valid standards for evaluating its own institutional life and in so doing has given tacit approval, however unwittingly to the values inherent in those criteria. Once the Church accepts such criteria as evaluative for its own institutional life it becomes increasingly difficult to be critical of society-at-large for adopting such measures as criteria for evaluating life. The end result is that these criteria become increasingly evaluative for the totality of the way we perceive life in our culture. They become "inviolable," and "intrinsic" and "sacrosanct" when in fact they are not! They are, rather, as Maurice Strong has said the results of choices we have made.²² These choices determine how we will view reality and what constructs we will design to help us maintain that view of reality. We have approached economic practice in North America as though the economic determinants of the market economy were inevitable. These economic presuppositions are so poignant and all-pervasive that they have unconsciously shaped our perceptions and thereby determine how we will view reality. Once these presuppositions

²² Maurice Strong, "Energy Approaches for a Liveable Planet" (paper presented at Habitat Forum, Vancouver, June 2, 1976), p. 11 (mimeographed)

are accepted they become determinative for all subsequent decisions so that it becomes increasingly difficult to extricate one's self individually or institutionally from such a system. This is why Schumacher calls for a "re-setting of the system,"²³ and why Gunnar Myrdal demands that the concept of Gross National Product and the whole structure of theoretical approaches surrounding it be dethroned to enable a new criterion of economic growth evaluation to emerge.²⁴

One obvious conclusion which emerges from such an analysis is that given the presuppositions of the market economy there is no way to even imagine, much less create a just and sustainable society because no such society is possible within the existing order. By definition, all legal, political, military, economic, scientific, psychic, and religious formulae within our society conspire to maintain the existing order. Justice cannot emerge through the current system of laws, regulations, tariffs, trade agreements, etc., because they have been created for the very purpose of maintaining the existing unjust order of social relationships between nations. Justice is an economic impossibility without a radical transformation in the

²³Schumacher, p. 12.

²⁴Leuenberger, p. 231.

existing structures and that radical transformation can emerge only when the presuppositions undergirding our current economic and technological structures are called in to question and judged by a standard external to themselves. To treat the existing structures as normative or inevitable and to accept the presuppositions undergirding them as inviolable or absolute is precisely what the scriptures condemn as idolatry and may be why the current social arrangements between nations issues forth in death and not life for the earth and its peoples.

The task of the Church therefore is to create a different set of criteria or premises on which to build a society and it cannot do that if it accepts the basic presupposition of the existing order as valid. The point is that at numerous times in its history the Church has evaluated its own "success" by criteria quite at variance with its culture and thereby provided a counter-culture with the alternate values and views of reality which that entails. Examples in church history, include the time of the martyrs, the hermits and the monastic movement, refusal to go to war, the anti-slavery movement in England, communism in the early church, the missionary emphasis on preserving the natives instead of obliterating them. Current examples include the persecution the Church is suffering today in Chile, Brazil, the Philippines and South Korea for seeking

to assist the poor in exploitive political and economic situations.

Another conclusion which emerges is that the Church, by the very nature of its institutional life finds itself entrapped in a "system" of its own which to some extent takes over and controls ecclesiastical policies and priorities no less than the economic "system" Schumacher described. For example, at the very time the United Church is curtailing its missionary personnel it is expanding the number of staff persons hired to handle its investment portfolio. This has little to do with the priorities or preferences of General Council, the governing body of the United Church: rather it has much to do with the intrinsic nature of an institution whose investment capital is growing while its contributions to missions diminishes because its income from its member churches is not keeping pace with inflation, and because the cost of maintaining personnel overseas is prohibitive with the devalued worth of Canadian currency.

The obvious question arises: why could not the monies accrued through investments subsidize the missional work of the church? And the equally obvious answer is that the United Church -- like any other institution -- is looking after its own future. "Charity begins at home" and other such time-honoured cliches are more than mere folklore; they grew out of the marketplace and they have direct bearing on those economic realities which affect institutional

survival. The logic is irrefutable: without a strong base no missional work could be financed at all. But the point is that we are rapidly approaching that point in history where neither our institutional survival nor our missional activity is going to make any difference except inasmuch as they facilitate a just and sustainable global society. As it currently exists it is indeed difficult to demonstrate that the Church in North America is facilitating such a global order.

A third implication of Habitat for the Church is that to some extent we have provided the theological basis for the Western world's technological development and exploitation of nature. Some of our theologies of creation have led to a distorted understanding of humanity and of humanity's role in relationship to nature. This in turn has permitted an anthropocentric technology to emerge. The Genesis mandate "to fill the earth and subdue it" has all too frequently been invoked as a license to exploit and abuse the earth and its resources. While it is true that humanity is given a position of power and responsibility in creation it is equally true that the power and responsibility is derivative, and exercised only in the name of Another. As Von Rod says

Just as powerful earthly kings, to indicate their claim to dominion erect an image of themselves in the provinces of their empire where they do not

personally appear, so man is placed upon earth in God's image as God's sovereign emblem. He is really only God's representative summoned to maintain and enforce God's claim to dominion over the earth.²⁵

Humanity, then, as God's representative is to show toward the earth and its creatures that care and respect which the Creator-God ordains. Humanity is not free to do whatsoever it pleases, but is held accountable for its care of the earth.

There is a legitimate exploration of nature and alignment with nature as expressed in the natural sciences and in those forms of technology which are ecologically responsible. But the problem today is the illegitimate exploitation of nature in ways that are destructive and irresponsible toward both peoples and the totality of the environment.

Regarding this relationship of humanity and nature Paul Albrecht writes:

Among Christians the question of the relationship between humanity and nature used to be a part of the doctrine of creation. The creation story found its classical expression in the first chapter of the Bible. Here the relationship between humanity and nature is established by a blessing of the Creator himself: fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and every living thing that moves on earth. Regarding this sentence and its impact on the Western tradition there has been some dispute in the last decade. Some theologians have stressed the measure of demythologization which lies behind such a commission. In all other cultures, man was restricted in his intercourse with his environment by respect to a lot of mythical entities which were

²⁵Gerhard Von Rad, Genesis (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 58.

believed to be around him, and by many rituals corresponding to these. In Genesis 1, however, a unique Weltverantwortung (world responsibility) is transmitted to mankind. This, together with other influences, lays the ground for the incredible development of natural science in the West in modern times. But others, like the historic Lynn White, believe the contrary and challenge those theologians who have interpreted Genesis 1 as the separation of mankind from all non-human beings and the transfer of a god-like power to human will and exploitation. From whence, says Lynn White, comes a Christian arrogance towards nature. This it is said, is the historical root of our environment crisis today.

Certainly both positions minimize the complexity of a large historical process. Nonetheless the present crisis calls for a new description of the human ontological position and the ethical values of his scientific and technological attempts to change the surface of earth. In this regard, a new approach to biblical and Christian tradition is necessary, in the church as well as in theology.²⁶

Albrecht continues "The decisive point is that humanity is created in the likeness and image of its Creator. Human dominion over earth is always conceived as a function of God's dominion over humanity."²⁷ Thus Albrecht agrees with Von Rad that humanity's power over nature is derivative rather than intrinsic, and therefore legitimized only to the degree that it is consistent with God's intention for the earth.

Without a clear understanding of God's intention for the earth or through disregard for that understanding we have frequently exploited the earth according to our own whims and fancies. Habitat more than any other United

²⁶"The Biblical Interpretation of Nature and Human Dominion," in Albrecht, pp. 40-41.

²⁷Ibid., p. 41.

Nations Conference to date revealed that such an assumed license with the earth has led us as a species to the verge of extinction. The environmental damage of the last century and the current ecological crisis caused Birch and Cobb to conclude:

The ecological crisis has called our attention to the need for adopting a different pattern of behaviour to our environment. It leaves open the question of whether the requirement of such changes in behaviour and the nature of these changes will be adequately based on traditional views of nature, such for example as is found in the thought of Western Christendom, or whether some radically different alternative is called for. It is our judgment that the dominant view of nature in Western Christendom is gravely deficient both as an interpretation of biblical views of the creation and as a basis for an adequate contemporary ethics of ecology.²⁸

Birch and Cobb then proceed to demonstrate that the weakness in traditional theology has been to posit humanity and God as the only meaningful objects on the stage of history. Nature is thereby relegated to the role of being merely as the props in the drama. Such a view sets up a basic dualism between humanity and God on the one hand and nature on the other, and leads to the kind of devaluation of nature which we see today.

The important question is whether there is intrinsic value beyond man. Western Christendom has affirmed the intrinsic value of man. But so far as the rest of creation is concerned it is primarily of an instrumental value -- to be of use to man. Man is the lone

²⁸Charles Birch and John B. Cobb, Jr. in "Rights for Both, Man and Nature," Anticipation No. 16 (1974), 34.

actor in the drama of the universe. All else is there to serve his purposes. The rest of creation are like the automobiles we construct. They are there simply to serve us. We readily slip into the view that the only value of non-human nature is its value to us.²⁹

It is this "instrumental" understanding of nature which has led to the deterioration of our environment and an attitude of disdain, disregard, indifference, and carelessness toward nature, according to Birch and Cobb.

They continue

The judgment that nature has no rights over against human beings is not that of the Old Testament. The dualism of man and nature . . . is not found in the Bible. Man, like all other forms of life comes from the ground and will return to it. The goodness of other elements of the creation is declared before the creation of man and apart from its usefulness to human beings. Furthermore, this recognition of the common creatureliness of human beings with plants and animals leads to the actual attribution of rights to other creatures in the Old Testament. In Exodus 23:12 one of the reasons for keeping the sabbath is so that the animals can rest. Deuteronomy 20:19-20 extends legal protection to trees. . . Just as we give rights to the incompetent human being and appoint guardians of those rights, so man has the responsibility of being a guardian of the rights of non-human nature. It may be difficult to define these rights in detail. However, in general terms our responsibility is to look upon non-human nature in terms additional to its instrumental value to us. The instrumental value to us must be weighted against the intrinsic value to itself and to God. We tend to leave out the second term in the equation. Many animals are slaughtered to serve as food for man. This instrumental value to man should be weighed against the intrinsic worth of all these creatures.³⁰

²⁹ Ibid., p. 33

³⁰ Ibid.

Likewise Birch in his paper "Creation, Technology and Human Survival" postulates a connection between our image of nature and the way we manipulate nature. He says

The ideology of nature dominant in western Christianity is the same one that is dominant in the secular world. It is a technocratic view of nature. As a scientist I say it is bad science. As a non-theologian looking in from the outside I am bold enough to say it looks like bad theology also. The technocratic view of nature is a clockwork model of nature. Not only is it inadequate. It is pernicious because it reinforces the pattern of mind and behaviour of a manipulative society. In this technocratic view the non-human creation is no more than the stage on which the drama of human life is performed. Plants and animals are there solely for us to use. In ethical terms they are only of instrumental value to us. This attitude to the created order is totally egotistic. It is arrogant. It sets the stage for insensitivity to what man is doing to the environment, even though it carry the tamely interpreted rider that we are to be stewards in our dominion over nature. It draws the support from a misinterpreted science and from a particular view of biblical theology.³¹

Birch calls for a sacramental view of nature which means that creatures have intrinsic value in themselves, and that there is a dependent relationship between all entities. He supports his position with scriptural and theological arguments.

While both Cobb and Birch bring new insights and perspectives to the current debate, and appropriately attack the dualistic approach to nature which separates man from nature, and which has provided the basis for humanity's instrumental abuse of nature, they fail to show that

³¹ Charles Birch "Creation, Technology and Human Survival" (paper presented at the Nairobi Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Kenya, 1975), p. 5 (mimeographed)

such dualism is inherent in traditional theologies of creation. Their postulate that nature has intrinsic value is essential for their philosophical conceptuality but simply cannot be defended biblically. As Derr points out all creation, humanity and the rest of creation alike, owe their value to God. The worth of all is derivative.³²

The process theologians have rightly emphasized that some of our traditional models for viewing God's creative activity in the world are both obsolete and outright erroneous:

God's relationship to the creation is not to be envisaged as that of a carpenter to the table he has made. The entities of the creation are not independent of God's continuous sustaining activity. This is a biblical meaning of creation. It is not just bringing into being but sustaining being. It is not man alone who is sustained by God but every cell and molecule in his body and every entity of existence. Without God all would collapse. God participates continually in the process of sustaining all that exists.³³

(and) The creation stories are not about events in the past. They are about relationships of dependence, alienation and renewal in the present. The image of God as the artist who painted the flower and left it is inadequate. In some way God is involved in the being of the flower and in all that exists here and now.³⁴

However, their criticisms do not necessitate a

³²Thomas S. Derr, "The Human Drama and God's Gifts of the Earth," Anticipation, No. 16 (1974), 30.

³³Birch and Cobb, p. 33.

³⁴Ibid., p. 34.

totally new philosophical construct. Surely, the biblical concept of humanity as God's representative in the earth conveys all the moral responsibility, sensitivity and respect for nature that an "intrinsic" value could possibly convey. The process theologians have rightly criticized the abuse of nature through misappropriation of humanity's "stewardship role" but it remains to be seen whether a concept of the intrinsic value of nature will create a less anthropocentric technology and society.

Nevertheless, the ultimate concern of the process theologians must remain our ultimate concern:

Our task is to rediscover the fundamental unity of the human and the non-human world without surrendering the truth about man's unique worth. The task calls for a radical reinterpretation of the man-nature-God relationship that has dominated Western Christianity over recent centuries and which is not adequate to meet the task of the 20th century.³⁵

Without a holistic theology which motivates us toward preservation of the earth, rather than destruction of the earth we will quite literally perish by our own hand as a species.

A fourth implication of Habitat for the Church is that we have not provided a forum for the voice of the poor of the earth. We have not emphasized within our own structures or within the structures of society the mandate of

³⁵Ibid.

participatory action which must precede any truly significant changes toward a just and sustainable society. The Church has frequently spoken for the poor but has rarely enabled the poor to speak for themselves. This is a prerogative we have assumed on behalf of the poor and which we have great difficulty relinquishing. It's as though it were much easier to "do good" for others than it is to enable them to "do good" for themselves. Neal points out however that it is literally impossible for one group to adequately represent another group's interests. This is why it is absolutely imperative that the poor have a voice in their own affairs. She says

The oppressed found out that the decisions made for them even by their "benefactors," were made in the interests of the giver. Whether what was given was financial aid to underdeveloped nations through the World Bank and AID program, or Southern Africa's medical program for African workers enabling them to work harder, or the Office of Economic Opportunity's programs for the poor; in the city, or the national, state and local welfare programs funded by the American tax system, or even the Christianity the colonial governments sponsored for the natives . . . in all cases, where participatory decision making has been lacking, the outcome of decisions has been in the interest of those making the decisions. Whether they be local residential community leaders or corporation managers or private college faculty senates or diocesan chancery officers, the fact is that no people can speak another's truth. This does not mean that planning programs should not exist. Far from it. It does mean, however, that the management of programs, no matter what they are, will provide for the interests only of those whom the specific managers represent, those to whom they see themselves accountable. Any group whose destiny is involved in a plan and which is not represented by its self-chosen representatives whom it can call to account is certain to be acted

against in the planning, whether wittingly or unwittingly.³⁶

A corollary of this finding is that "no group, no matter how loud its protest, will be taken seriously by those doing the planning unless they have sufficient potential to disrupt the outcome to warrant their being included in the plans."³⁷

Probably no obstacle for the poor is greater to overcome than this lack of participation. Leuenberger sees the powerlessness of the poor increasing as the world becomes increasingly technologically complex. This decrease of power of the poor is directly related to technological dependence on expertise and specialization. He says

The history of modern Western society may be described as the replacement of lay solutions by rationalized expert solutions . . . We are experiencing today the emergence of a highly potent cosmopolitical techno-culture, a transactional system of the great business corporations, a concentration of economic financial power so complex that resistance becomes more and more difficult and more and more abstract.³⁸

An example of the way technological dependency decreases the power of the poor to participate in planning their own future is seen in the case of nuclear energy technology in Brazil. Professor J.L. Lopes, a Brazilian

³⁶ Neal, p. 74-75.

³⁷ Neal, p. 74.

³⁸ Leuenberger, p. 228.

scientist, traces the steps of nuclear development in Brazil and points out that at each significant step where nuclear research may have been initiated and/or maintained by Brazilian scientists and researchers it was curtailed by outside intervention by the United States, France, and Germany. But once the development of nuclear energy was contracted to West Germany then it was permitted to proceed in Brazil but with foreign technicians in control. This prompted Lopes to review patterns of development in Brazil and to conclude that "technology transfer" is a myth. All that is transferred to Brazil is the location of the plants and their foreign advisors and technicians. He quotes the conclusions reached by fellow scientists in Brazil who researched this matter.

The information concerning the origin of the technology utilized in the installation of industrial enterprises. . . a necessary preliminary to the examination of the technological activities of these firms. . . shows clearly the predominance of the expertise of outside origin. 62% of these industries had recourse to exterior sources. In most of the firms, that is about 2/3 of them, this expertise underwent no adaptation in the transfer to the national production system; in 21% of these enterprises, however, the imported technology was adapted to Brazil . . .

It must be underlined that 3/4 of the foreign enterprises which utilized foreign technical services, requested them from their parent firms, and as for the national institutions of research. . . universities and institutes. . . their services were rarely used by the foreign companies which we investigated, and as a result they have provided little stimulation to

the national technological complex.³⁹

Another example of the way technological dependency reduces the power of a people to direct their own destiny is through the appeal to specialization and expertise. In arguing for nuclear energy at a conference sponsored by the World Council of Churches, Professor Bethe said

Energy presents many technical problems. Some of these are soluble, like that of nuclear waste disposal. But there are also problems insoluble by foreseeable technology, such as making large amounts of energy from solar heat in an economic manner. The public should not demand that technology solve the insoluble problems. They should trust the judgment of the scientists and engineers on which problems are soluble and which are considered insoluble and not demand that all problems of nuclear energy be fully solved BEFORE the first plant is put into action.⁴⁰

The kind of trust Bethe demands is the kind of naivety which has already led humankind into the morass of technological dependency. The intimidation of the experts has led us increasingly into the abdication of power over our own lives and continues to demand that we increasingly yield more and more power to technological elitists. The voice of the common man is not even heard anymore, much less the voice of the poor. Perhaps it is this awareness that our lot is cast together, that our futures are one which will enable us to increasingly "hear" one another, and mobilize for a just and sustainable society.

³⁹J.L. Lopes, "Technology Transfer and Dependence," in Albrecht, pp. 187-188.

⁴⁰H.A. Bethe "For Nuclear Power," Anticipation, No. 24, (1977) p. 8.

Chapter 4

THE CORRESPONDING IMPERATIVES UPON THE CHURCH

Some of the implications which emerged from Habitat for the Church in North America then are these: we have not made the meeting of basic human needs a high priority; we have been implicitly reinforcing those values and pre-suppositions inherent in our current technology and economics; we have, however unwittingly, given theological support to a view of nature which has led to the exploitation and destruction of nature and the exhaustion of the earth's resources; and we have not enabled the poor of the earth to speak for themselves.

These implications lead to certain corresponding imperatives: firstly, the structures and systems of the Church itself need to reflect those alternative values which can facilitate and undergird a just and sustainable global society; and secondly the systems and structures of society need to be realigned in conformity with these alternative values.

First then let us look at that imperative which rests upon the Church. In addressing the issue of the role of the Church in relation to the State, Karl Barth said in 1938:

Perhaps the most important contribution the Church can make is to bear in mind in the shaping of its own

life that, gathered as it is directly and consciously around the common centre, it has to represent the inner within the outer circle. The real Church must be the model and prototype of the real State. The Church must set an example so that by its very existence it may be a source of renewal for the State. . . . The Church's preaching of the gospel would be in vain if its own existence, constitution, order, government, and administration were not a practical demonstration of the thinking and acting from the gospel which takes place in this inner circle. How can the world believe the gospel . . . if by its own actions and attitudes the Church shows that it has no intention of basing its own internal policy on the gospel? How can a reformation of the whole people be brought about if it is common knowledge that the Church itself is bent only on self-preservation and restoration -- or not even that? Of the political implications of theology which we have enumerated, there are few which do not merit attention first of all in the life and development of the Church itself. So far they have not received anything like enough attention within the Church's own borders The Church must not forget that what it is rather than what it says will be best understood, not least in the State.¹

In discussing the role of institutions in society today, Robert K. Greenleaf suggests that if even one major institution in North America would begin to fulfil a servant leadership role in our society the change would be dramatic and global in its impact.² He defines an institution as

a gathering of persons who have accepted a common purpose, and a common discipline to guide the pursuit of that purpose, to the end that each involved person reaches higher fulfillment as a person, through serving and being served by the common venture, than would be achieved alone or in a less committed relationship.³

¹Karl Barth, Community State and Church (Gloucester, MA: Smith, 1968), pp. 186-187.

²Robert K. Greenleaf, Servant Leadership (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), p. 49.

³Ibid., p. 237.

Greenleaf wants to retain the word "institution" because even though it is a term which has fallen into disrepute today its essential meaning is "something which enlarges and liberates" rather than something which confines and dehumanizes. He argues convincingly that in spite of their inherent weaknesses institutions are the organizations through which things get done in contemporary society. There is no way to circumvent their power and influence, and any significant transformation of social structures and systems is going to have to be done at the institutional level. Hence Greenleaf advises the Church that if we lack competence about how institutions work "we had better get some. Institutions are the stuff this society is made of, and if we feel responsible, we will either get some competence regarding institutions or we will follow the leadership of someone who has it."⁴

In defining servant leadership Greenleaf describes the servant leader as one who is called to serve first, and whose subsequent leadership emerges out of faithfulness to that call. This type of leadership he contrasts with those who seek first to become leaders and later choose to serve after leadership has been established. While acknowledging the absense of "pure" types in either indivi-

⁴Ibid., p. 229.

duals or institutions he nevertheless maintains that this distinction between servant-first and leader-first enables an organization to determine which characteristics are dominant in its institutional life.⁵

Greenleaf maintains that

Most charitable institutions, of which the Church is one, have tended to view the problems of society as "out there," and it was assumed that service to the "out there," was the sole justification for their existence. Now the view is emerging that one begins "in here," inside the serving institution, and makes it a model institution. This model, because it is a thing of beauty, in itself, becomes a powerful serving force.⁶ (underlining his)

The first imperative for the Church then is to create within its own institutional life models of service and caring which reflect a value orientation significantly at variance with the value orientation dominant in our society today. Unless we are able to do that within our own organizational structures and systems we will have no viable alternative to present to society-at-large. We are to be the embodiment of the words we speak.

As Greenleaf hastens to add however, this mandate is not one given to the Church alone as though we had a different standard than that required of industry, government, or the universities. All are called to give servant-leadership!

⁵Ibid., p. 14

⁶Ibid., p. 129.

Nor are we to assume for one minute that the transformation of the Church into a servant institution will be one bit easier than the transformation of any other major institution. As Greenleaf points out:

The common assumption seems to be that (institutions) "for profit" are self-serving whereas (institutions) "not-for-profit" are selfless. In my experience, both assumptions are false. The self-serving motive is an attribute of individuals who are just as prevalent in not-for-profit as in the profit-making institutions.⁷

While acknowledging difficulties before us, how does the Church nevertheless proceed to move toward servant leadership in today's world? We move toward such leadership by embodying those very values that gave us birth. The Christian Church has within its own historical and biblical roots those foundational principles which can provide the moral and ethical constructs needed to create a new social order. We ought not to present the social dimensions of the gospel therefore as though they were something new, or alien, or tangential to faith itself. As Karl Barth says

The Christian community acts within the meaning and limits of its own mission and competence when it speaks . . . in important situations in political life. It must not give the impression that it never wakes from the sleep of an otherwise non-political existence until such matters. . . are under discussion. The Church must see that it does not make a habit of coming on the scene too late, of entering the fray only when its opinions no longer involve any particular risk and can no longer exert any particular influence. It must

⁷ Ibid., p. 50.

see above all that the idea of the Church as the representative of a definitive class-conditioned outlook and morality is not allowed to gain ground . . .⁸

Similarly, in discussing the meaning of Christian conversion today, Gutierrez says

The Christian has not done enough in this area of conversion to the neighbor, to social justice, to history. He has not perceived clearly enough yet that to know God is to do justice. He still does not live in one sole action with both God and all men. He still does not situate himself in Christ without attempting to avoid concrete human history. He has yet to tread the path which will lead him to seek effectively the peace of the Lord in the heart of the social struggle.⁹ (underlining mine)

And elsewhere Gutierrez points out that when faith and political action are in proper relationship to one another what emerges is the creation of a new type of person in a different society.¹⁰ Justice is not the result of salvation. Salvation means justice and brings justice. There can be no separation between the two in a hermeneutic which is faithful to the biblical witness.

What then are those biblical and moral guidelines which must undergird our institutional structures? The Gospel according to Luke records that in announcing his mission Jesus read from those portions of Isaiah which refer to the prophetic and healing role of the servant of Yahweh.

⁸Barth, pp. 185-186.

⁹Gustova Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation (Mary-Knoll, NY: Orbis, 1973), p. 205.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 236.

This was the biblical motif Jesus used most frequently in referring to his own ministry and which perhaps more than any other contains those biblical criteria which describe the nature of servant leadership.

George A.F. Knight in his commentary on Deutero-Isaiah points out that Israel's election was not to salvation but to service: "Israel has been chosen, then, not with the object of being saved, nor merely to be the covenant people as an end in themselves, but in covenant relationship with God, to be the channel whereby the world may be saved."¹¹

In his commentary on Isaiah 42:1-4 Knight says

Israel is chosen not merely for her own good but in order to do what a servant is meant to do, viz., serve. Israel's service is to bring the true way of life to the rest of the world. Mishpat represents the conception of a rule or law for life. So it points to the idea that God has revealed the right way for men to live together as brethren in peace and concord. Its root meaning has to do with the idea of judging, so the noun that we have here signifies the entirety of judgments that God has already delivered. Mishpat certainly does not mean "religion" in the modern sense of the word, for nowadays the word religion describes only one area or department of human life, its spiritual element, as modern man supposes, over against the everyday material affairs that occupy his attention. The Servant is to be the channel whereby God's revelation of his loving purpose for all men can reach them. To sum up -- in himself the Servant Israel counts for nothing; yet Israel's God, acting in conformity with his saving purpose, has chosen this pariah and is actually now holding him up; it is God therefore who has empowered him to be what he is called to be, for by himself he is quite unable to fulfill his calling.

¹¹George A.F. Knight, Deutero-Isaiah (Nashville Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 76.

Since, however, this wholesome way of life is not to be mediated in a vacuum, Israel herself is called to be more than the mere mouthpiece of God. Two points arise here showing what she is meant to be. In the first place Israel is an empirical people, a people that lives within history. She is therefore condemned to face the vexations and tribulations that all men must face who live in a fallen world. Secondly, Israel is shown to be nothing in her own right, for she does not exist apart from her function, from her reason for existing. Apart from that she would be what the gods are -- mere negation. Thus the Israel idea is to be equated with the idea of mission as such, a mission, however, that is motivated by the Spirit and which takes form within a given area of space and time. The awful judgment lying upon Israel therefore is that, should she reject her calling, she will revert to sheer negation . . . So now we are given the first indication of the important theme that DI will later unfold, that the way the Spirit chooses to operate is the way of self-emptying not self-assertion, and that it is by that means and not another that the Servant will bring to the whole world the revelation for which it is longing. . .¹²

The faithful servant then is the one who chooses the way of renunciation. Knight continues

The Servant is meant to sit down alongside the brokenhearted just where they are to be found, viz., in the mire of this human life of ours; and in this way, by his very presence with them, he will become the instrument by which a strength and hope that is not their own will be transferred to them. He is to do this thing, moreover, just because God himself does it (40:29; 57:15; 66:2), and the Servant cannot be above his Master. Moreover, God's Spirit upon him will be the guarantee that this way will be effective.¹³

Westermann sees the same theme in Isaiah 42: it is not through self-assertiveness but through self-denial that the Servant is to bring salvation; not through power

¹²Ibid., pp. 71-73.

¹³Ibid., p. 73.

but through powerlessness; through a literal identification with the poor and powerlessness. The purpose of the Servant is to bring forth justice but the manner in which that justice is obtained is non-coercive.¹⁴

Zimmerli and Jeremias point out that the suffering servant passages of Deutero-Isaiah provided the scriptural basis for interpreting the significance of Jesus' death in the early church: "the christological interpretation of the Deutero-Isaiah servant belongs to the earliest period of the Christian community and at a very early stage became fixed in form."¹⁵

These biblical scholars proceed to demonstrate that the early church used Isaiah 53 as scriptural proof that the death on the cross was divinely ordained and possessed vicarious efficacy; that these passages more than any others influenced the development of the christology of the early church; that liturgical references in the New Testament point to the suffering servant passages repeatedly (particularly Philippians 2:6-11); and that Isaiah 53 plays a distinctive part in primitive Christian paraenesis and the

¹⁴Claus Westermann, Isaiah 40-66 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), pp. 92-97

¹⁵Walther Zimmerli and Joachim Jeremias, The Servant of God (London: S C M Press, 1965), p. 94.

literature of martyrdom. Jesus as the suffering servant of God becomes the prototype of service, selflessness, vicarious suffering, and humility.¹⁶

Zimmerli and Jeremias also maintain that the Gospels bear witness to the fact that Jesus used these passages of scripture when speaking of himself and his mission: "The assertion of the Gospels that Jesus reckoned with the possibility of a violent death has the strongest historical probability behind it."¹⁷ And "The assertion. . .that Jesus found in Isaiah 53 the clue to the necessity and meaning of his passion can also claim strong historical probability."¹⁸

What difference does it make that the Jewish people were called to this role of servanthood, or that Jesus accepted it as that motif most descriptive of his mission? What is the relevance of this historic and biblical perspective for the transformation needed in the Church today? Simply this: without a clear understanding of the nature of servanthood and its implications for our institutional life we will not be able to evaluate either our current programs and priorities or to establish those goals and objectives which will move us progressively toward a just

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 94-99.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 103.

and sustainable social order. Remember the task of the Servant is to bring justice!

It is of ultimate importance that the Church understand that its primary task today is the establishment of a just and sustainable society. Preaching the gospel means working for justice; any "gospel" that does not call for justice in the social order is not the gospel! Hence Karl Barth can say

The opportunity that it is offered to fulfil this duty is simply the one that lies nearest to hand: the preaching of the whole gospel of God's grace, which as such is the whole justification of the whole man --including political man. This gospel which proclaims the King and the Kingdom that is now hidden but will one day be revealed is political from the very outset, and if it is preached to real (Christian and non-Christian) men on the basis of a right interpretation of the Scriptures it will necessarily be prophetically political. Explications and applications of its political content in an unmistakable direction will inevitably take place (whether in the direct or indirect illumination of the political problems of the day where the Christian community is gathered together in the service of this gospel. Whether this happens or not will depend on the preachers, but not only on them. It is a bad sign when Christians are frightened by "political" sermons -- as if Christian preaching could be anything but political. And if it were not political, how would it show that it is the salt and the light of the world? The Christian Church that is aware of its political responsibility will demand political preaching; and it will interpret it politically even if it contains no direct reference to politics. Let the Church concentrate first, however, on seeing that the whole gospel really is preached within its own area. Then there will be no danger of the wider sphere beyond the Church not being wholesomely disturbed by it.¹⁹

¹⁹ Barth, pp. 184-185.

But, someone may object, the task of the Church in preaching the gospel is to call persons to repentance and faith, to proclaim salvation. And so it is; however our concepts of salvation have often been too narrowly defined, and have frequently been equated with or limited to personal repentance. While personal repentance is absolutely essential to salvation it is not the totality of salvation. Personal repentance is not an end in itself, rather it is a means to an end; it is part of the total process of salvation that includes the whole social order and even the totality of the created order.²⁰

The scriptures maintain an internal hierarchy of values which places justice in the social order before formal worship and religious service. The Church has tended to reverse the order: worship, service and then social action toward justice, but it is a consistent and persistent theme in both the Old and New Testaments that God requires justice in the social order as an absolute prerequisite to religious ceremony and service. Isaiah 58:5-9 points out that fasting is not what the Lord requires, but rather justice and caring for the poor and needy. Amos 5: 7-24 calls for just dealings in the courts and in economic policies toward the poor and warns that the "day of the Lord"

²⁰Romans 8:19-22.

is an event to be feared rather than desired by those who are unjust, no matter how ceremoniously and officiously religious there are! Jesus is portrayed in Matthew 23 as citing case after case after case in which the Scribes and Pharisees are guilty of hypocrisy for omitting the "weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and good faith" while going to great effort and detail to fulfil ceremonial religious customs.²¹ In Mark 12:38-40 Jesus is reported as saying "Be on guard against the scribes, who like to parade around in their robes and accept marks of respect in public, front seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets. These men devour the savings of widows. . . ." ²²

The point of these biblical references is not to give isolated illustrations and examples so much as to point out that prophets like Isaiah, Amos, and Jesus were decrying that which was normative and accepted practice in their day. They were saying that "the system needs re-setting."

The Church today has this mandate to "re-set the system" no less than did ancient Israel, Jesus and the disciples, and the early church. And the process

²¹Matthew 23:23 (NAB)

²²Mark 13:38-40 (NAB)

or methodology which is intrinsic to the mandate is one of servanthood. This prompts Gutierrez to write

Only by . . . making itself poor in order to protest against (poverty) can the Church preach something that is uniquely its own: "spiritual poverty," that is, the openness of man and history to the future promised by God. Only in this way will the Church be able to fulfill authentically--and with any possibility of being listened to--its prophetic function of denouncing every injustice to man. And only in this way will it be able to preach the word which liberates, the word of genuine brotherhood.²³

Gutierrez concludes:

To paraphrase a well-known text of Pascal, we can say that all the political theologies, the theologies of hope, of revolution, and of liberation, are not worth one act of genuine solidarity with exploited social classes. They are not worth one act of faith, love, and hope, committed--in one way or another--in active participation to liberate man from everything that dehumanizes him and prevents him from living according to the will of the Father.²⁴

It is in this context that Robert K. Hudnut suggests that the task of the Church in North America today is to diminish not expand, to suffer not to surfeit, to be reduced not rewarded, rejected not received, humiliated not honoured, to reflect discipleship to Christ not diversion from reality. This then is the imperative that rests upon the Church!²⁵

The second imperative upon the Church is to enable precisely this same value transformation to occur in the

²³Gutierrez, p. 302.

²⁴Ibid., p. 308.

²⁵Robert K. Hudnut, Church Growth is Not the Point (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. IX-XI.

structures and systems of society which must occur within its own institutional life. These are not two distinct tasks but two differing aspects of one single task for as both Schumacher and Greenleaf point out this mandate for servant leadership is placed on all the institutions of society just as profoundly as on the Church.

It is not coincidental therefore to find in Schumacher's model for a more humane economic system ingredients which parallel the goals and intentions of a servant church:

Since the prevailing system has been shaped by a technology that drives it into giantism, infinite complexity, vast expensiveness, and violence, it would seem to follow that we should engage the best of our intelligence to devise a technology that moves in the opposite direction -- towards smallness, simplicity, cheapness, and non-violence. With the help of such a technology it would be possible, I am sure, to create an economic system to serve man, in the place of the present system which enslaves him. But this is said from a Christian point of view, where "serving man" means something different from what it may mean when the point of view is modern materialism.²⁶

In other words, the systems and structures of technology and economics - like the Church - exist for service to humanity and nature and not vice-versa. Humanity currently exists in bondage to the technological "principalities and powers of this age" and the gospel is the good news that these systems can be destroyed, or transformed

²⁶E.F. Schumacher, The Age of Plenty (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1974), p. 15.

to serve humanity rather than enslave humanity.

Schumacher is aware that his model for "economics on a human scale" demands new concepts but he hastens to add that new concepts remain only wishful thinking until new technologies and types of organizations evolve. He says

This is of decisive importance. It shows that appeals for good behavior and the teaching of ethical or spiritual principles, necessary as they always are, invariably stay, as it were INSIDE the system and are powerless to alter it: unless and until the preaching leads to significant NEW TYPES OF WORK in the physical world.²⁷

In describing what he means by a technology that moves toward smallness, simplicity, conservation of resources, less expense, and non-violence he says

To strive for smallness means to try to bring organisations and units of production back to a human scale. Where we feel that things have become too large for human comfort, let's see if we cannot make them smaller . . . Small units of production can use small resources -- a very important point when concentrated, large resources are becoming scarce or inaccessible. Small units are ecologically sounder than big ones: the pollution or damage they may cause has a better chance of fitting into nature's tolerance margins. Small units can be used for decentralised production, leading to a more even distribution of the population a better use of space, the avoidance of congestion and of monster transport. Most important of all: small units, of which there can be a great number enable more people "to do their own thing" than large units of which there can only be a few. Smallness is also conducive to simplicity.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 14-15.

Simplicity, from a Christian point of view, is a value in itself. Making a living should not absorb all or most of a man's attention, energy, or time, as if it were the primary purpose of his existence on earth. . . .

Giantism and complexity bring it about that the capital required for production grows to fantastic proportions. Only people already rich and powerful can gain access to it. All other people are excluded . . . Not surprisingly, the poor countries, caught in the net of gigantic, complex, immensely expensive technology, used for even the simplest tasks, are saddled with mass unemployment, which makes all exhortations to self-reliance a mockery.

From a Christian point of view, non-violence is also a value in itself. . . As with so many other things, perfect non-violence may not be attainable in this imperfect world. But it DOES make a difference in which direction we STRIVE. A system of production and a style of living, or a concept of efficiency, which advance steadily in the direction of violence, which refuse to recognise non-violence as a valid criterion of success, move on a disaster course. And the warning signals are appearing all around us. We call them pollution, environmental degradation, ugliness, intolerable noise, rapid exhaustion of resources, social disintegration, and so forth. In other words, I do not think of violence only in the context of man's relation to other men, but in the context of all his relations including those with animate and inanimate nature.

In more mundane terms: what is non-violence? We can say, for instance, that biologically and ecologically sound farming systems, with "good husbandry" and the careful observance of the (recycling of all organic materials) represent a non-violent approach, whereas the ever intensifying warfare against nature of highly chemicalised, industrialised, computerised farming systems represents violence. Some people say: "The choice is between these violent systems and hunger. Look how productive, how efficient, these systems are. We need them to feed the growing populations of the world." The question is: Is this true? . . . There are thousands of farms around the world who are obtaining excellent yields and making a good living without resort to chemical fertilisers, insecticides,

herbicides, fungicides, etc. Would it not be right to take these alternatives seriously and support them consciously, instead of putting all our eggs into the basket of violence?²⁸

While recognizing that such changes must be implemented gradually he nevertheless insists that smallness, simplicity, capital and resource-saving and non-violence must be chosen as the "direction of conscious striving" in the future. They

commend themselves also from a social and political point of view. Good human relations, in my experience, are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to attain in large units, whether these are schools, universities, offices, or factories. Participation, so rightly demanded in industry and elsewhere, cannot become a reality when units are so large and complex that people cannot know each other as people and the minds of ordinary men and women cannot encompass the meaning and the ramifications of the whole.²⁹

Similarly Ruben Nelson quotes Norbert Prefontaine

When human well-being is defined in terms of goods and services, concern for production and delivery of goods and services become central to social policy. Production is important, for more goods is seen to be better than less goods; delivery is important, for all persons have some claim to a share of the gross national product. In other words, the underlying question of a social policy which sees man as essentially a consumer is a question of scarcity. Current social policy in North America is cast in these images. We are almost overcome by the need for greater production and more equitable distribution of goods and services.

We do not stop to reflect, however, that while goods and services can be delivered, relationships have to be entered into. Nor do we reflect on the differences between "delivering" and "entering into," or the degree

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 15-19.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 21.

to which our architecture and organizational forms facilitate the production and delivery of goods and services and inhibit the entering into of relationships. We miss the point that sensitivity and humanity are necessary to entering into relationships, but not to delivering goods and services, and that sensitivity is neither an output nor an outcome. We also fail to note the differences between entering into a relationship and entering into a meat grinder.³⁰

Nelson concludes that in such a world economics is primary and social policy is secondary and derivative. He says "Even social policy is not that policy which has to do with protecting and enhancing the constitutive relations of man, but that policy which has to do with the provision of goods and services to those who for some reason have 'fallen out of' the economic system."³¹ Nelson is saying that even our social welfare programs at home and our aid programs abroad can only be defined in economic terms.

Nelson is contending that a social policy which is economically determined cannot in any substantial way correct the evils and disparities inherent in our current economic system, nor can they essentially do anything to humanize the plight of the poor: goods and services will not be the answer to the needs of the poor in a dehumanized world any more than they have been the answer for the affluent. He like Schumacher calls for an "economics of relationships and not merely an economics of things."³² In other words

³⁰Ruben F.W. Nelson, The Illusions of Urban Man (Ottawa: Ministry of Urban Affairs, 1978), p. 45.

³¹Ibid., p. 45. ³²Ibid., p. 46.

the way out of a dehumanizing system is not higher levels of productivity and technological specialization but toward more flexible humanizing structures.

Nelson maintains that every system goes to great lengths to blame the victims of its dehumanization rather than face the fact that it is the system itself which needs to change. As an example he cites the following:

It is reported that officials in the Public Service Commission of Canada are exploring the possibility of introducing public servants to Transcendental Meditation as a way of dealing with the growing atmosphere of stress and dissatisfaction with the public service. Unfortunately, and almost predictably, this new program assumes that the problem of a stressful working environment lies with those who work in it, and not with the conditions within which they work. In like manner, those who govern us -- from parents to prime ministers -- too often respond to expressions of distrust with elaborate P.R. campaigns. They act as if the problem is our distrust, rather than their action -- action to which distrust is a sane response.³³

Ultimately, Nelson, like Greenleaf and Schumacher, comes to the conclusion that the fundamental crisis today is a crisis of the spirit. He senses that a spiritual renewal must undergird new values and new society. To this end he quotes Irving Kristol:

I think we can all agree that the United States today--and western civilization in general--is experiencing what we can call a crisis in values. A hundred years ago, we would not have called it that; we would have called it a spiritual crisis. I think those two phrases are not entirely the same, and the fact that we call it a crisis is in itself a hint.

A crisis in values is something that happens

³³Ibid., p. 62.

OUT THERE. It is something you can cope with through rational manipulation of institutions, of beliefs, of ideas.

A spiritual crisis is something that happens to YOU --deep down--and that you have to cope with in some inward way.

Therefore, the phrase "crisis in values" can mislead by emphasizing what is essentially a technological approach to a problem that is not technological; this technological approach asks: how do we look at society; how do we manipulate it; how do we shape it in such a way that we don't have a crisis in values? I don't think that's the way. Real spiritual crises are resolved not by social science but by mysterious cultural processes which somehow reach inside every human being. . .

I think we should be careful about emphasizing the unprecedented character of our problems. A good part of our problems is thoroughly preceded and previous civilizations have thought about them more profoundly than we have.³⁴

Could it be that Kristol is witnessing to the reality that every generation in its own day must determine what it means "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"³⁵

Are there nations, societies, or regional groupings of peoples who are already putting into practice some of the criteria Schumacher suggested which would move us toward a just and sustainable world order? Under the leadership of Moa Tsetung the Chinese people moved rapidly from intense poverty and dependency into a nation which is today relatively autonomous and self-sufficient with the basic needs of life

³⁴Ibid., pp.62-63

³⁵Micah 6:8 (KJV)

met for every citizen. Mao combined justice with sustainability in the sense that he tied technological development to the needs of the people and to ecological realities. He said "take agriculture as the foundation and industry as the leading factor. In planning place the emphasis on agriculture, light industry, and heavy industry in that order."³⁶ In order to render services in the rural areas equal to those in the cities Mao mobilized mass movements to provide electricity, lights, water, heat, flood control, transportation, education, and medical and social services (i.e. the "barefoot doctors" system of rural prevention treatment). The point is not that in this way Mao brought China from the "dark ages" technologically speaking into the twentieth century. Rather the point is that Mao appropriately adopted technology to cultural, social, economic, and ecological realities in China and thereby saved China from technological dependency every bit as much as bringing her into technological efficiency. That is the miracle of modern China!

As Leuenberger points out no less an economist than Heilbroner sees China as a model for the future in many respects. Leuenberger sees China as a model "in their attempt to decentralize. . . and to develop goals related

³⁶New China's First Quarter-Century (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1975), p. 68.

to social justice and participation rather than growth . . . (and in their resistance to) the powerful tendency of science and technology to develop a momentum of their own."³⁷

Leuenberger concludes that the only sound and sustainable form of human society for the future will be an equilibrium economy. This requires a sharp curtailment of all forms of economic growth which damage our life-support system. In such a society economic capital would not expand at the expense of ecological capital and what is produced is made more durable, reparable and recyclable. He admits that acceptance of this environmental-oriented economy and ethics challenges existing economic assumptions and practices but is absolutely essential if we are to save the earth.³⁸

In the final analysis what is needed today is a totally new synthesis - a new configuration of the way the essential ingredients of life fit together. Ruben Nelson quotes Peter Berger as saying "Much of what passes for future-think is an imagination of what the present would be like if it 'worked right' . . . it is an imagination dominated by NOW which aims to imprint the best of now upon the future. The trouble is that the best of now . . . is not very satisfactory."³⁹

³⁷Theodor Leuenberger, "Plea for a Post-Modern Society," in Paul Albrecht, ed. Faith, Science and the Future (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1978), p. 229.

³⁸Ibid., p. 231.

³⁹Nelson, p. 61.

I would go so far as to say the best of NOW cannot be "very satisfactory" because it is based upon the wrong premises. Vice can never be made a virtue no matter how many rationalizations are constructed to defend it. Our current forms of economics and technology based on greed and acquisitiveness will be the destruction of us all.

Quite literally, something altogether new and essentially different must evolve if a just and sustainable society is to emerge. Nelson says we must find ways to "embody our best intention and aspirations in our physical, organizational, and linguistic forms...we need to legitimize the search for a compassionate society as an official and not merely an extracurricular responsibility."⁴⁰

But there can be no healing until there is an acknowledging of illness. Because of this he says

Basically, we are a well-intended people who have not yet understood the pervasive and powerful inter-penetration between the forms of our society on the one hand, and the eyes with which we see and the understandings with which we explain ourselves to ourselves on the other. This would not be serious if the forms in the midst of which and by means of which we live, sustained and affirmed our life together. But they do not. Our predicament, then, is doubly difficult. First, we are consistently diverted from understanding the truth about ourselves as human beings by the forms in the midst of which we live. Second, since we have allowed ourselves to believe that our forms are both value-free and image-free, we are kept from understanding the way our forms mislead and diminish us.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 67.

It may seem paradoxical but it is nonetheless true that as long as we see ourselves as free men who are able to do what we want with this earth, to shape it according to our will, we will be trapped by the forms of our own creation. Only as we understand the interpretation of our lives and the way that we are bound to our environments, and accept an image of ourselves as not external conqueror but as creators of life and form in the midst of life and form, will we understand enough to begin with some consistency to heal ourselves and this earth.⁴¹

Nelson defends the "appropriateness of tentative experimentation" in creating new models of global understanding. He maintains that many of us are intimidated by the accusation that we ought not to criticize the existing order until we have a fully developed alternative. He argues that such an accusation is based on a misunderstanding of the way creative change evolves. It is out of the existing milieu with all its incompleteness that alternative understandings and new configurations emerge.⁴²

So also Leuenberger argues that the key to the future lies not in awaiting some monolithic international concensus on a broad range of intentions but in strengthening the common links which bind us all together, fragile though they may be. Political and ideological differences are no longer the issue. All ways of coping in the existing global situation are incomplete and solutions will be found in the midst of

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 66-67.

⁴²Ibid., p. 74

pluralism, not in a global consensus.⁴³

The Church therefore must not hesitate to give direction simply because it does not have all the technical answers to what a full-blown model of a just and sustainable society would look like. We do not need to have all the answers, but if we want to speak with relevance to the needs of our times we do need to know the direction in which the answers lie.

⁴³Leuenberger, p. 235.

Chapter 5

THE CHURCH AS MODEL

Introduction

The mission of the Church is to make the love of God concrete in human experience. The form that mission takes in each generation is determined by the needs to which the Church must respond. In our day the primary task before the Church is the enabling of a just and sustainable society. As a servant community the Church is called to embody those values it espouses and thus demonstrate to the world that an alternative social order is both imaginable and attainable.

Greenleaf defines servant leadership as that quality of caring which puts service to others before aspirations for power and says that the primary need in our world today is to create institutions of caring.

We have known for several millennia what the individual is like who becomes distinguished as servant. But in large complex institutions, we have yet to learn how to work together to achieve what individuals have long been able to do. This we must learn. We have no other options.¹

There is no ministry outside the institution if there is not ministry in it. He further maintains that we have treated institutions impersonally and have failed to

¹Robert K. Greenleaf, Servant Leadership (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), p. 245.

understand the power and potential inherent in a caring institution. In this regard he says

. . .in a society dominated by a complex of institutions, the quality of life achieved WITHIN churches may have more to do with their influence on society than what they teach or advocate.²

If it is indeed true that the quality of life within the churches is the most effective way to influence societal change then our missional thrust in terms of education must be primarily directed inward before it can become outward in its impact and ramifications. Mission today requires educating for change within the churches and thereby effecting change in society.

What changes need to occur within its own institutional life if the Church is to more effectively embody those alternative values it professes?

The Role of The Seminaries

Greenleaf insists that the key to institutional renewal within the churches lies with the seminaries. They are quite literally the seminal centres for developing those theological constructs which must undergird ministry in an age dominated by technological structures and systems. In stressing their importance he says

²Ibid., p. 239.

if the building of servant leadership becomes the serious mission of a group of churches, then the central conceptual resource that stands behind these churches will become the architect of the more just, more loving, more serving society. The logical architect in the present structure of things is the seminaries.³

In their architectural role the seminaries can facilitate the emergence of a more just and sustainable society by providing the theological and metaphysical foundations for such a society and the new hermeneutic necessary to enable it to emerge. Without a hermeneutic relevant to a highly institutionalized, technologically complex society it is unlikely that the Church will adopt new goals and objectives. In this regard Ronald Sider says that he believes there are literally millions of individual Christians and thousands of congregations in North America who would respond to the social mandates of the gospel if they were convinced that such a response was a legitimate expression of what it means to follow Jesus Christ today.⁴ Developing a hermeneutic which will convince the Church of that truth is one of the most pressing needs in theological education today.

Gunter Linnenbrink seems to be responding to the same need when he says that "what is required in Christian theology

³Ibid., p. 82.

⁴Ronald Sider. Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1977), p. 5.

today is a rediscovery of the political dimension of the death on the cross."⁵

Christian educators from seminary professors to church school teachers must provide the biblical basis for "theologies of relinquishment," "theologies of liberation" and "theologies of ecology." While it is true, as Birch points out, that "churchmen cannot expect precedents from the past to provide answers to questions never asked in the past"⁶ it is equally true that Christians cannot begin to think and act in new ways without some sense of awareness and conviction that these new ways of thinking and acting are faithful expressions of the meaning of the scriptures for our day. The depth of conviction necessary to enable the Church to persevere in these new commitments and involvements will only emerge from the realization that it is the Lord himself who is calling it into these new forms of ministry.

Are the seminaries and theological schools providing the visionary leadership and enabling function which is needed in society today? Greenleaf cautions that they may be failing in these most crucial areas. He sees a widening

⁵Gunter Linnenbrink, "Theological Perspectives of the Churches' Involvement in Development." Report to the Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development, World Council of Churches, Albano, June 24-30, 1973.

⁶Charles Birch, "Creation, Technology and Human Survival" (Nairobi Assembly of the World Council of Churches Kenya, December 1, 1975), p. 10.

gap between the pressing problem of our times and the ability of the seminaries to respond.

The hierarchy of contemporary institutions that exist to serve mankind may be seen to be on three levels. In the base group are families, communities, businesses, governments, schools, health and social agencies. Standing next above, in a position to serve both individuals and institutions, and with power to exert a value-clarifying influence, are churches and universities. At the third level, because of the great opportunity to harbor and nurture prophetic voices that give vision and hope, I see theological seminaries and foundations. In a sustained good society, the gap between opportunity and performance narrows progressively at levels two and three. When there is faltering, as there seems to be now, the gaps between opportunity and performance may have widened, perhaps most at the third level.⁷

Greenleaf's concern is that seminaries have not developed the theological and metaphysical constructs for a just and sustainable society. Without these constructs it is impossible to provide that apologetic and hermeneutic which will enable the Church to facilitate such a society. Furthermore, without such goals and understandings theological schools cannot provide those educational experiences which will most effectively equip ministers to be agents of social change. Theological training will tend to be too narrowly defined by traditional practices and institutional concerns.

The Second Report of the Theological Education Committee of the Church of England seems to echo Greenleaf's

⁷Greenleaf, p. 329.

concern that theological education may lack relevance to changing social needs. In the words of the committee:

A danger is that, given the relevance of theology to the life and faith of the contemporary Christian, theological study may take place in an atmosphere too little exposed to the real problems presented by the world today. To take one example: it may be said that the Church at large is becoming increasingly aware of the missionary dimension of its work, of its ecumenical situation, and of its changing role in an industrial society. It is precisely for its lack of understanding of these new insights that theological education is so often criticised. The reason for this can only be that those who are concerned with theological education are not sufficiently sensitive to a changing world and a changing church.⁸

Nor does this criticism apply exclusively to the English system of theological training. Wesley Maultsaid, in a survey of Anglican, United, and Lutheran ministers in Saskatoon, found that these ministers had received little formal education which prepared them to respond in innovative ways to changing social conditions. Some of those surveyed wanted to exclude the seminaries from participation in continuing education programs because they perceived the theological schools to be "too cerebral" or "out of touch."⁹ The writer suggested in an unpublished paper that one reason ministers encounter such difficulty in responding

⁸ Doing Theology Today. The Second Report of the Theological Education Committee of the Church of England. (Westminster, England: Church House, 1969), p. 3

⁹ John Wesley Maultsaid, "Continuing Education in Saskatoon," (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Masters Thesis, July, 1970), pp. VI-VII.

to social and political issues is that nothing in their seminary experience has equipped them for such encounters.¹⁰ John Frame, in his "Proposal for a New Seminary," suggests that theological schools tend to equate intellectual acumen with academic excellence and academic excellence with ministerial competence. He recommends increased field experience and introduced other criteria in addition to academic performance into the process of assessing the students' spiritual maturity and ministerial competence.¹¹

Jose Chipenda, speaking in Vancouver on behalf of the World Council of Churches' Program to Combat Racism, mentioned the lack of relevance he had personally experienced, and continued to perceive in much of contemporary formal theological education. He was hopeful about advances he saw in contextual educational models.¹²

One solution recommended by the theological education committee of the Church of England was that ministerial training incorporate more practical experience, utilizing the action-reflection model. Such a model of theological education does not diminish, but rather increases the relevance of the historic theological disciplines.

¹⁰James Bragan, "Habitat Forum: Options for Church Response" (Claremont, CA: paper presented in partial fulfilment for a directed study project, July, 1977), pp. 10-11

¹¹John M. Frame, "Proposal for a New Seminary," (paper presented at Fuller Theological Seminary, January, 1977).

¹²Statement by Jose Chipenda, representative of World Council of Churches, group interview, Vancouver, B.C., November 23, 1978.

Until recently the practical experience gained at a theological college consisted of visits to parishes, regular hospital visiting and spells of teaching in schools. This was clearly too narrow a range. Industry and the social services are two obvious fields in which the ordinand needs to have some personal knowledge, and most theological colleges recognise the need of finding means to include something more than the traditional visits to parishes, hospitals, and schools. But even more important than the choice of practical work are the conditions under which it is done. It is perfectly possible to do part-time, or even full-time, work in factories, hospitals, or schools without ever being forced to ask oneself fundamental questions or to relate any of the new problems encountered to one's theological thinking. One can simply accept the conventions and attitudes one finds there, and indeed one can gain a considerable sense of confidence and expertise simply by adapting oneself to the ethos of the particular institution concerned.

Practical experience of this kind is valueless for the purposes of theological education, and to avoid this danger it is essential that every ordinand in the course of his practical work should be brought to see the questions which it raises for the Christian understanding of God and man, and helped to learn how to answer them by disciplined theological thinking. This can only be achieved by careful choice and supervision of the practical work and by the systematic provision of opportunities within the theological college for discussion and study related to it.¹³

The point is that such experiences need to be viewed as an integral part of and not an option adjunct to the total theological education program.

Dr. Howard M. Mills, Secretary of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education of the United Church of

¹³Doing Theology Today. pp. 11-12.

Canada, says of this action-reflection process

In my own experience, radically changed awareness comes seldom by a rational process of sitting down to calmly look at material and come to conclusions. It happens rather by radicalizing experiences (on a picket line, confronted with poverty conditions, etc.) and the awareness and new rationales come reflectively after the fact in trying to make sense of this new and radicalizing experience. That to me is what is involved in Scripture, where the people of God at whatever stage experienced the deity in a new way with radicalizing implications and what we have in Scripture and certainly what constitutes theology, is an attempt to make sense of those experiences both personally and collectively after the fact. On the basis of such formulation or rationale, then new experiences and openness to the movement of God become possible, which subsequently require further reformulation, etc. etc.¹⁴

In recent years there have been increasing attempts by the theological schools to come to grips with this need for a more integrative approach to the academic and practical aspects of ministerial training. Students need to acquire that knowledge and those skills and experiences which will enable them to think theologically and respond prudently in their roles as social change agents in parishes and communities. Experiences which provide opportunity for action-reflection under adequate supervision need to be an integrative part of their training process.

Some attempts within the United Church of Canada to move progressively toward many of the aforementioned

¹⁴Letter from Dr. Howard M. Mills, Executive Secretary, Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, United Church of Canada, June 8, 1978.

suggestions are the following. The Vancouver School of Theology, an ecumenical venture of the Anglican and United Churches is presently developing a "competency" model of theological education which seeks to incorporate criteria other than academic standards into an assessment of the students competence for ministry.

Since 1976 there have also been significant improvements in the "field education" experiences provided for United Church ministerial candidates. The United Church has always required practical field work prior to ordination and the usual practice has been for candidates to serve a minimum of two summer sessions on a student mission field. The weakness in such a system was that the supervising minister was frequently on vacation for much of the summer and that the life of the parish in the summer was not representative of the life of the parish during the other months of the year.

In such a system, the emphasis was frequently on covering the summer supply needs of the parish rather than providing maximal supervised training opportunities for the candidate.¹⁵ Under the new proposals the candidate relates to the same parish for an eight month internship.

¹⁵Letter from T.J. Sawyer, Chairman, Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, Alberta Conference, United Church of Canada, February 17, 1976. (mimeographed)

This provides continuity so that he/she can be responsible for initiating, facilitating and evaluating programs through a total process. It also means that he/she has constant supervision throughout the total internship; and that the candidate is relating to the parish at its most active, rather than least active sessions of the year. Also, placements can now occur in a wide variety of congregational and institutional settings in contrast to the more restrictive rural settings of the traditional summer placements. These changes represent considerable improvements because as Albion Wright has pointed out, the United Church continues to see itself primarily as a rural church in what is increasingly an urban society.¹⁶

There have also been increasing attempts in recent years to move toward lay schools of theology and action-reflection groups in local parishes. Regents College on the campus of the University of British Columbia is representative of a graduate program designed for laity who do not intend to enter the professional ministry but who nonetheless seek theological tools for discerning faith-realities in contemporary society.

Some of the most exciting action-reflection education models emerging in local parishes in recent years are the

¹⁶ Statement by Albion Wright, Executive Secretary of Division of Mission in Canada, United Church, personal interview, Vancouver, B.C., October 15, 1976.

Christian Discipleship Groups which emerged in Calgary, Alberta, since 1973. This movement began as the concern of six laypersons and two clergymen for a relational Bible study process which would incorporate a social action-reflection dimension. The initial group grew to twenty-two persons before before sub-dividing into two groups. Currently, there are eight such groups, ecumenical in nature, and numbering approximately 120 persons. As the groups grew in numbers and sub-divided they also grew in biblical awareness and in an awareness of the political-social dynamics of downtown Calgary. The six lay persons and ministers responsible for leadership were attached to downtown churches with special concerns for the mission of the Church in the inner city. When the residents of an inner-city community approached one of the Discipleship Groups for assistance with regard to a land development issue a Mission Group* was formed to assist them. This Mission Group subsequently formed the Committee on Urban Life and Development (COULAD), which coordinated neighborhood conscientization and action. Two other Mission Groups have emerged in Calgary out of the Discipleship Groups: The Calgary Mental Health Society; and the Retreat Ministries Mission Group. The Mental Health Society was

*Mission groups are persons called to a specific task who take disciplines appropriate to their life together and to the task they are seeking to accomplish. It is an action-reflection model developed by the Church of The Saviour in Washington, D.C.

formed when a Calgary social worker spoke to a Discipleship Group about the needs of psychiatric patients being released to Calgary from the Alberta Psychiatric Hospital without adequate facilities to accommodate them. Once again a Mission Group was formed which played a coordinating role in securing funds for improving an existing home for patients; and in establishing a non-profit organization for the opening of additional facilities. Three additional homes have since been opened. The Retreat Mission Group provides one annual three-day retreat and monthly silent retreats in the foothills west of Calgary. All three of these missional groups emerged out of a context that incorporated both political-social awareness and biblical study.

There are a variety of values inherent in an action-reflection approach to theological education whether it occurs in a theological school or in the local parish. By its very nature it forces engagements of a social and political nature.

One of the values of the action-reflection approach to theological education in the parish is that the relevance of the scriptures have become concretized in the participants' social experience. Theological reflection and reformulation is a daily exercise for any group seeking to relate biblical faith to social and political change.

Another value of this process is that it enables the participant to move beyond a charity mentality in regard to social needs. Engagement in the actual process of social change delivers the participants from any illusions he or she may have had about significant change occurring through welfare hand-outs, aid programs, or traditional charity and benevolent approaches.

A further value of the action-reflection approach to theological education is that it necessitates participation with non-Christian groups toward mutually desired goals. Participants realize experientially that the Church can no longer work single-handedly toward social change. In the words of Loren Halvorson, "the Church can no longer see itself as a unit unto itself, but rather it must see itself as an integral organismic part of the whole of society."¹⁷ And Harold Vaughan points out that

there is a recognition today that God does not only address or use the church -- he is also at work in the world. This change alone in our thinking has many consequences. Not the least important is a new concern in the church about its mission and not so much concentration upon its structure or meaning.¹⁸

The Marxist-Christian dialogue, the Christian socialist movement and other emerging coalitions point to the reality that

¹⁷ Loren Halvorson, "The Church's Mission in an Opened Society," (Calgary, Alberta: paper presented at conference on urban ministry, January, 1974). (mimeographed)

¹⁸ Harold W. Vaughan, "How your ministers are trained," Update (Toronto: United Church House, February 1, 1973), 14.

the Church is not unique in its commitment to social justice and the radical transformation of society. It has a cooperative, rather than an exclusive role to play in this regard. Certainly the process integral to liberation theology which sees theology emerging out of the dialogue and interaction between the Church and the world rather than as "a given within the Church" reinforces this new awareness that our contribution toward a just and sustainable society will emerge through cooperation with others committed to the same goals, rather than in isolation of them.

Another value of the action-reflection approach is that it allows the content of theological education to be controlled by the process or praxis called for by the situation rather than presupposing that a given theology will automatically apply to any and all given situations. Rev. Jose Chipenda stated that this approach to theology was the dominant methodology in third world nations and provided for a relevance which he perceived as lacking in contemporary North America and European approaches to theology.¹⁹

The Role of The Clergy

If seminaries are called to be the architects for a just and sustainable society then ministers may be perceived

¹⁹Chipenda.

as those persons called to implement the design. Although inspired leadership in the Church emerges from laity as readily as clergy, it is the clergy nonetheless who most significantly effect the quality of leadership of any given denomination. Whether clergy are comfortable with this reality or not in North America the local parish minister is the most important factor influencing the average parishioner's attitudes and understandings toward the Church and its role in the world.²⁰ Moberg in his analysis of the various roles of the clergy points out that the clergy's role as institutional representative is second only to his/her role as preacher. In the eyes of the parishioner it is assumed that he/she speaks for the church as well as to the church.²¹ Even in the eyes of the community it is assumed that the pastor speaks for the church.²² It is for this reason that Neal argues that it is futile for national and international church bodies to make pronouncements on social issues unless the local parish priest,

²⁰Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1977), pp. 55-68; David Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 493.

²¹Moberg, p. 489.

²²Ibid., p. 493.

minister, or rabbi, likewise supports that position. It is her contention that the congregation takes its cue from the local minister in determining the import of such pronouncements.²³

If it is true that the local minister is seen as the institutional representative of his/her respective denomination then it follows that he/she can be a good representative or a poor representative but not a non-representative. Since the minister is not viewed as an isolated individual but as part of the larger organization then he/she would be wise to maximize every opportunity for interpreting and giving support to the national and international ministries of his/her denomination. If the minister cannot support the programs and priorities of his/her denomination, then he/she should transfer to another denomination which he/she can support or try to change the priorities of his/her current denomination by whatever means are appropriate. Because of this tremendous power and potential as institutional representative the minister needs to realize that he/she can radically alter national and international ministries through his/her enthusiastic support of or indifference toward the larger mission of the Church. The

²³ Marie Augusta Neal, A Socio-Theology of Letting Go (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 26-27.

larger Church needs him/her and he/she needs the larger Church. Perhaps one reason ministers feel so alone or isolated in their respective parishes or assignments is because they fail to recognize and/or understand the implications of their role as institutional representative.

On the other hand Neal points out that ministers who seek to be institutionally supportive frequently find themselves in a "no-win" situation. They are asked to support their denominations social action pronouncements and programs, yet to do so is to run the risk of loss of members and monies. Ironically, the same denominational office that admonishes the minister to support the pronouncements also holds him/her accountable for the loss of members and finances. The trick is to be prophetic and profitable at the same time but few attain it! Denominations need to determine where their priorities lie and support those ministers who risk themselves, their jobs and their futures through taking a prophetic stance. This also requires that denominations develop criteria other than increases in members and finances for evaluating ministerial success. In discussing those factors which exert social control over the clergy, Moberg concludes that the most effective control over Protestant clergy is the local congregation.

Ministers who wish to maintain influence over their congregations almost invariably are forced to compromise or silence convictions on issues tinged

with social, political, or economic implications. Thus many have surrendered all they have to preach about in order to keep the privilege of preaching. Soon after entering the ministry, most clergymen who once thought of the church as an instrument of social reform become adjusted to their members' standards and focus attention upon personal sins and religious consolation for human problems. Those who do not adjust are often forced out of the church or even out of the ministry. The majority try to cure societal problems by converting individuals, but these efforts usually support the status quo and are ineffective in dealing with socioeconomic problems.²⁴

In the face of these built-in contradictions between institutional expectations and prophetic necessities how can the clergy enable the churches to move toward justice and sustainability?

A major goal of the clergy is to retain the vision. As Moberg has pointed out, most clergy entered the ministry with a vision of those changes which the gospel could effect in individual lives and social institutions. For a variety of reasons it's easy to lose that vision, to begin to doubt the power of such a dream. However, one of the greatest gifts a minister can give to the parishioners he or she serves is the sharing of the dream. Greenleaf points out that what is lacking most in society today is a style of leadership which shares its vision and thereby calls forth a visionary response in other people. He says

²⁴Moberg, p. 502.

. . .the essence of leadership derives from an unusual openness to inspiration . . . A leader has a goal, knows what it is, and can articulate it for any who are unsure. By stating and restating the goal the leader gives certainty and purpose to others . . . A leader initiates, provides the ideas and the structure, and takes the risks involved in accomplishing the goal. . . .The goal is a sense of overarching purpose, a big dream, a visionary concept, an ultimate consummation which one approaches but never really achieves.²⁵

The key to ministerial leadership then lies not so much in having the answers as in being aware of the direction in which the answers lie; not so much in seeing the current crisis as an insoluble problem as much as seeing these issues as opportunities for almost unlimited response. The very scale and magnitude of the problems confronting humankind today means that a variety of approaches toward solutions are acceptable, even preferable. Therefore, clergy need to bear in mind, as Marty points out, that there are a myriad of acceptable responses to social issues and that these responses can be created in dialogue with the laity and the community and do not have to emerge fully hatched from the clergy.²⁶

The task of the clergy therefore is to teach, preach, and embody a theology of hope without denying the severity

²⁵Greenleaf, pp. 14-16.

²⁶Martin E. Marty, The Search for a Usable Future (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 124-130.

of the current crisis and without perpetrating a false hope which only adds to the despair of our day. It is a hope which calls for repentance and faith: repentance for our sins against the earth and its peoples in the past and faith that we can and will right these wrongs in the future.

There are also subtle changes clergy can affect which will perhaps influence parishioners more profoundly than anything said from the pulpit. Clergy can create an atmosphere of acceptance of diversity within a congregation which permits a wide variety of new forms of ministry to emerge. A congregation might reject the formation of a social action committee within its structure because of fear of how such a committee might function. Nothing is gained by castigating a congregation for such fear. Fears have to be faced and dealt with or they will re-surface in a myriad of covert ways. As Greenleaf points out "legitimacy begins with trust."²⁷ The pastor can be an effective agent of the institution by working to restore trust in the larger church, a deep and genuine trust that this institution does in reality exist to serve people. "Trust is first. Nothing will move until trust is firm."²⁸

In addition to creating that kind of atmosphere which encourages congregations to consider new forms of ministry

²⁷Greenleaf, p. 70.

²⁸Ibid., p. 88.

which have direct social and political consequences, the minister may also be influential in creating the opportunity for increased lay participation in the various programs and structures of the local parish. His/her openness to change and willingness to try new approaches to administration and programming facilitates this process. There is a basic contradiction between advocating autonomy and self-government for the poor on the one hand, and maintaining a kind of ministerial authoritarianism in administering the local parish on the other hand. As Barth has pointed out the very structure of the church conveys much to the world!²⁹ Where and when the laity are encouraged to create more effective models for ministry and administration they usually do. Greenleaf recommends that the first task of the emerging church is to learn how to build a society of equals in which there is strong lay leadership in the administration of the church and strong pastoral leadership in the operation of the church.³⁰ At least one congregation within the United Church of Canada is experimenting with a form of team ministry which involves both laity and clergy in the day to day administration of parish affairs.³¹

²⁹Karl Barth, Community State and Church (Gloucester, MA: Smith, 1968), pp. 186-187.

³⁰Greenleaf, p. 81

³¹Report of Highlands United Church Congregational Meeting, North Vancouver, B.C., October 31, 1976. (mimeographed)

A major structural change in many United Churches in recent years designed to increase lay participation and power has been the move toward a Unified Board. A Unified Board dissolves the division between the Stewards and Elders (Session) and the artificial distinction between financial matters and spiritual concerns in the life and ministry of the parish. In the majority of the parishes which adopted this change, it has increased the numbers of persons involved in the decision making process and given more autonomy to the various committees. As of 1973 more than half of the congregations of the United Church had opted for the new Unified Board structure and of these the majority cited improvements in communication, co-ordination, participation, program innovation, and decision-making.³²

Ministers can educate for a more just and sustainable society by recommending to the local congregation that alternative criteria be considered when determining the allocation of funds. Through such a process congregations would critically evaluate where and how they spend their monies. Each parish could then set up guidelines for future expenditures based on criteria which reflect concern for social justice and environmental sustainability. Moral and

³²E.L. Homewood, "New Structures for a New Era," Update (Toronto: United Church House, February 1, 1973), 60-62.

financial support would begin to be given to groups, programs, and ministries on the basis of a differing set of criteria than we have used in the past. This could mean that some church-related programs might be discontinued while other non-church-related programs might be funded. Such an objective approach to ministry might be painful but fruitful!

Since the mid-seventies the national divisions of the United Church of Canada have employed a zero-base budgeting approach to program and staff expenditures. While some of the reasons for this have been economic the primary reason seems to have arisen from a genuine concern to think theologically about budgets. For example, the Division of Mission in Canada developed a process in 1976 to enable it to review needs compared to resources and to determine priorities based on its theology of the mission rather than merely sharing equally an ever-decreasing pie.³³ Approaching budgets theologically allows the Church to have integrity and a sense of direction regardless of whether the fiscal resources rise or fall. Budgeting is then based on criteria other than only economic factors, and financial resources become only one ingredient in the matrix of the ways and means to accomplish the task; and not necessarily the most

³³T.R. Anderson and others, "From Theology to Mission or How to Spend Money with Conviction" (Minutes of British Columbia Block Grant Forum, North Vancouver, B.C., November 14-15, 1975), pp. 1-3. (mimeographed)

effective or most determinative factor in doing ministry. History can substantiate that the Church has often been at its best when economic resources were least.

The United Church of Canada at all levels of its corporate life is seeking to think theologically about budgets and is increasingly endeavoring to give moral and financial support to those programs which are designed to effect social and political change toward a more just and sustainable society. Some examples of these commitments are Project North, a cooperative endeavor with the Anglican Church in Canada to enable the native peoples of the North to obtain justice through self-determination in regards to land claims issues and resources development in their lands; Gatt-Fly, a five denomination effort to assist Canadian churches in advocating alternative economic policies which move toward more just international trade agreements; The Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America, sponsored by the member churches of the Canadian Council of Churches to work for human rights in Latin America and to assist exiles in locating in Canada; and PLURA a cooperative church effort for conscientization in Canada regarding the plight of Canada's poor.³⁴

³⁴United Church of Canada, Record of Proceedings, 27th General Council (Don Mills, Ont., Canec, 1977), pp. 1-3. (mimeographed)

Some examples of regional assistance are the hiring of a researcher and social animator to assist the churches and concerned citizens groups of interior British Columbia in clarifying the issues and impact of uranium mining in British Columbia; monies designated to assist the development of low-cost modular housing for third world peoples following Habitat; and personnel and funds to assist British Columbia native peoples in their court battle regarding their land claims.³⁵ Examples in local congregations are monies allocated to assist a local citizen's group in educating and mobilizing politically for justice in South Africa; providing space for financial assistance to a women's rights centre; and providing funds, volunteers, and counseling assistance for a transition house for battered wives and children.³⁶

While it is encouraging to see support for such programs it must be acknowledged that many such programs continue to be seen as peripheral rather than primary to the mission of the Church. Therefore the minister's role in the future will be to increasingly interpret such programs as integral

³⁵ British Columbia Conference, United Church of Canada, Minutes of the Outreach Committee (Vancouver, B.C. March 13, 1979), (mimeographed).

³⁶ "Expanding Horizons 1978" Annual Report, Highlands United Church, North Vancouver, B.C. February 4, 1979. (mimeographed).

to what it means to be the Church today!

Perhaps the most significant and influential contribution which the clergy can make toward a just and sustainable society is the witness of personal lifestyle. Ministers can individually and corporately choose lifestyles which demonstrate alternative values to the rampant egoism and consumption evident today. In the final analysis there is no substitute for personal witness. This is what Marty calls "the power of the gesture"³⁷ and Vincent means by "acted parable."³⁸

The value of such "gestures" and "parables" increases significantly however whenever they become corporate. One current example of an attempt to witness corporately to an alternative lifestyle is the proposal now before the General Council of the United Church of Canada that all ministers receive essentially identical salaries regardless of assignments and abilities. This Equalization Plan which originated among the clergy and has support from the clergy seeks to demonstrate that a salary plan is a theological statement, and that an increasing number of ministers in the United Church

³⁷Marty, p. 126.

³⁸John J. Vincent, The Jesus Thing (London: Epworth Press, 1973), p. 59.

are concerned about the theology implicit in the existing system. Current salary remuneration procedures reinforce the dominant values of a highly competitive, materialistic society and do not reflect the unity which binds United Church ministers to a common mission. There are a variety of arguments theological and otherwise which commend this parity program: it has been in force for many years among overseas missionaries, is the current practice in many third world churches, and would bear witness to an alternative value system. Most importantly, it would be one way of moving toward a more just and equitable system within the structures of the United Church.

The Role of The Parish

The local congregation, like the seminaries and the clergy seeks in a variety of ways to express its servant leadership in the world. The quality of life which is expressed within its own fellowship and through its own commitments impinges and impacts on the local community. By the very fact of its existence in the community it legitimizes the values of that community unless it consciously and consistently makes public those distinctions between itself and its community. The levels of impact and political power inherent in a congregation are immense because the life of the congregation is inextricably interwoven with the life of the community.

For this reason even those decisions which appear to be totally internal to the life of the congregation have impact on the community. For example, if a congregation receives a gift of \$100,000 and decides to set that money aside for possible future capital expenditures instead of giving it to world development programs then that decision is known throughout the community and confirms those self-preservation values inherent in the larger community. If on the other hand a congregation chose to release those funds for world development purposes such a decision would also be known throughout the community and would probably not be supported by community opinion except as a "charitable act." In other words, the larger community while praising the decision as a "laudable act" by the church would probably seek to detach itself organically from the implications of such a decision. Newspaper headlines and media coverage of such a decision politically serve just such a purpose. Making the decision appear "exceptional" or "different" minimizes its political impact on the community. It is important to consider these dynamics because a congregation which is seeking not only to change the institutional priorities of the Church but also the economic and political priorities of the larger society needs to be aware of the political impact of its decisions. The symbolic gesture on the part of a congregation may not be as effective as an educational-

infiltrative role in community groups and organizations. The task of the Church is to move society in these directions and not to consider its mission accomplished when a particular congregation here or there makes a symbolic gesture as necessary and powerful as that gesture may be!

The above illustration is admittedly simplistic. A given congregation may be justified in retaining the funds for a variety of reasons. However the point remains: a congregation needs to realize that its decisions and the values reflected therein have a profound impact in its community and does not go unnoticed, particularly when the decisions reached are at variance with the values inherent in that community!

There are a variety of ways local congregations can communicate values which move toward a just and sustainable society. An increasing number of congregations are participating in the Ten Days for World Development programs which are designed to serve a development education function in the local parish while funding those development programs which enable peoples to help themselves. Some churches are utilizing the educational resources available through the World Council of Churches' Program to Combat Racism. Others are becoming aware of the corporate responsibility programs of the various denominations which ask their constituents to review their investment portfolios and confront

those companies whose policies support repressive and unjust governments and systems. Congregations, particularly in Canada are becoming familiar with the Tourism with Insight Program (TWIN) which seeks to make tourists aware of the insidiousness of much current tourism. The impression is frequently given that tourism assists the host country economically and in terms of its long range development. For most third world nations this is not true. TWIN suggests alternative forms of tourism which have more positive educational and economic effects for both the tourist and host country.³⁹

Congregations can increase awareness of third world issues through exchange programs. For example in 1976 ten persons from British Columbia churches visited the nation of Belize and in 1978 ten persons from Belize visited British Columbia. In each case the visitors had opportunities to visit and dialogue in schools, hospitals, homes, public meetings and churches. Through such encounters understanding is increased and the possibility for informed political response is enhanced.

There are also opportunities for individuals and groups within the congregation to encounter persons and groups in local communities who suffer as a result of social injustice

³⁹James Taylor, "Misguided Tours," Observer (August 1974) 12-14, (TWIN, 91 East Avenue South, Hamilton, Ontario).

or systematic inequalities. Awareness and conscientization of third world problems is much more likely to occur as awareness and conscientization occurs with regard to the rights of minority groups in North America.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity available to the local congregation for effecting change toward justice and sustainability is the more subtle shift within its own internal priorities. When a congregation looks outward instead of inward, when it begins to get a sense of meaning beyond its own survival, then it discovers new possibilities for ministry. A junior high church school class in a local congregation was struggling with ecological issues and decided to clean out a ravine behind the church where bottles, cans, tires, and assorted refuse had been dumped for years. They stacked the debris in the middle of the church parking lot where it remained for days before some adults hauled it away to a proper land reclamation dump. Although the adults were somewhat incensed by the youths' decision to stack the trash in the parking lot it was precisely this action which turned what was otherwise just another good deed into a symbolic gesture. It was their way of saying that the dumping in the ravine had been a corporate sin against nature and that it required a corporate response. Their action was debated at two committee meetings, one Church Council meeting and at the Official Board. Without the

abrasiveness the awareness may not have emerged either. It is interesting to note that a motion arising out of the Youth Forum at General Council in 1977 recommended that each United Church consider establishing a recycling depot. Is this not an opportunity to move from individual "gesture" to "corporate witness?"⁴⁰

Two years ago, the outreach committee of this same congregation decided to begin to fulfil an educational function in the life of the congregation instead of merely allocating funds for designated causes. Subsequently articles appeared in the church newsletter and the Sunday calendar informing the congregation of the various ministries provided by the United Church through monies given for outreach. Guest speakers were invited to speak of specific ministries or to explain new ways of understanding mission today. Demonstration booths and hand-outs were available at coffee hour between the morning worship services. In the past two years monies for local outreach programs funded directly through the congregation have risen from \$2300.00 to \$9600.00, and monies for the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church (dispersed through the national church) have risen from \$16,900.00 to \$26,300.00. In terms of shift within congregational priorities outreach monies has risen from 16% of

⁴⁰United Church of Canada, pp. 467-489.

the total budget to 26% of the total budget in the last two years. Perhaps more significant, however, is the fact that a committee which could not muster six members two years ago because of lack of interest now keeps fourteen members active in an educative capacity. It probably was not coincidental that a social action committee also emerged in this congregation during this time.⁴¹

The Role of The Denomination

This discussion of the role denominational leadership can play in effecting social change toward a new society will of necessity center on the United Church of Canada. However, the suggestions will hopefully have relevance to a variety of ecclesiastical structures and organizations.

The United Church of Canada began as a union of the Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches in Canada in 1925. In 1968 the Evangelical United Brethren in Canada also joined this union. With heavy emphasis historically on the teachings of John Wesley and John Knox the United Church would be considered a "mainline" Protestant denomination in North America. It currently maintains membership in The World Methodist Council, The World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and The World Council of Churches.

⁴¹"Expanding Horizons 1978", p. 14.

Its current structure is presbyterial in nature, being divided into a national administrative body administered by the General Council Executive and divided into five major divisions, twelve conferences which do not parallel the Canadian provinces in their boundaries, and ninety-two presbyteries.

The United Church currently registers 2,369 pastoral charges and 3,542 Sunday Church Schools served by 2,035 professional persons. Current membership is 935,226 persons and total monies raised for all purposes in 1977 was \$108,090,736. Of this amount \$16,115,710 went to the Mission and Service Fund in 1977 for the administrative, educational, and missional programs of the United Church. However, this latter figure is not indicative of the total outreach or benevolence givings of the member congregations inasmuch as many congregations maintain local outreach programs which are supplemental to their mission givings through the larger church. Approximately half of the current membership (449,478) provide financial support for the local congregation expenses while approximately one-third (282,348) provide financial support for the Mission and Service Fund. The per capita giving to benevolence as reflected in the Mission and Service Fund is \$24.61 or 14.4% of the total contributions which is below average for both Canadian (26%) and United States (20.3%) denominations. There are

presently 608 candidates in training for the ministry and the United Church maintains six theological schools, the majority of which are ecumenical.⁴²

The above statistics while somewhat significant in themselves take on increased meaning when interpreted in the Canadian context. Although confirmed membership is less than a million members (935,226) the inclusive membership is 2,104,088.⁴³ This group, primarily composed of adherents, inactive members, and families of members, while not officially related to the United Church nevertheless view it as their church to look to for pastoral care and service. In the last government census 3.8 million Canadians registered themselves as affiliated with the United Church.⁴⁴ Essentially, one-sixth or over 15% of Canadians view the United Church as their church. It is not only the largest Protestant denomination in Canada but because of its ecumenical nature more closely approaches a national church or a federated church than any other denomination in North America. It would appear that the United Church has great potential to

⁴²Facts about the United Church of Canada 1978-79
(Mission & Service Fund leaflet, Toronto, January, 1979).

⁴³"Church Financial Statistics and Related Data 1978,"
(Commission on Stewardship, National Council of the Churches
of Christ in the U.S.A., January, 1979), p. 6.

⁴⁴"Membership Dips," Observer (February 1979), 47.

significantly affect political opinion.

However, recent tabulations indicate fairly drastic declines in United Church statistics. Between 1967 and 1977 confirmed membership dropped 12% (1,060,335 to 935,226); and the numbers of Sunday Schools dropped 21% (4,467 to 3,542). Pastoral charges in the last five years have decreased by 12% (2581 to 2369). And although the givings to the Mission and Service Fund increased by 73% in the past ten years (\$9,321,797 to 16,115,710) this increase did not keep up with inflation in terms of "real dollar" value.⁴⁵

In summary, the United Church of Canada has been experiencing a decline in membership, in pastoral charges, and in Sunday Church schools. While the professional leadership serving pastoral charges has remained somewhat constant in the last ten years there has been an overall decline in church related vocations, particularly in overseas personnel. Monies for the larger work of the church (administrative, educational, and missional) have increased but not sufficiently to maintain existing programs in light of inflationary increases in staff salaries and escalating costs. The following excerpt from a financial report to the Division of Mission in Canada is indicative of the concerns currently

⁴⁵Homewood; and "Facts About the United Church," p. 2.

expressed in all divisions of the United Church. This report was submitted in October of 1977 and pertains to the 1978 budget.

After some years of budget expansion of 7% or 8% per year, we are now looking at 1978 with the 2% growth in total budget and to 1979 with a smaller yet growth percentage. At a time when certain budget items cost more each year by 6%-9%, it is evident that the squeeze will be felt somewhere. The figure of \$1,209,400 is no higher than it was in 1975. Program is the easiest area to hold because generally there is no impact on positions, people, or salary. The hurt is least! Conference Block Grant is difficult to cut because each year minimum salaries are raised, travel and housing is increased. Staff services and administration is hard to cut because the Church is always asking and expecting more of us and the pressure is rather to add more staff to meet these demands than to hold the line or trim staff. Accompanying staff there must be adequate travel, meetings, and program and resource budget to support desired objectives of the position.⁴⁶

Decline in membership, lack of funds, and a growing awareness of the need to think theologically about budgets has forced the United Church to prioritize its programming in light of its understanding of mission today.

One explanation for declining membership and insufficient funding in the United Church is its involvement in political and social issues. Peter Wagner has suggested that Churches which engage in social action will lose members and financial income,⁴⁷ and therefore be less effective

⁴⁶J.D.L. Robertson, "Budget Report," Division of Mission in Canada (Toronto, October 13, 1977), pp. 4-5 (mimeographed)

⁴⁷Wagner, p. 58.

witnesses for Christ in the world. Robert Hudnut however, interprets declining membership and financial resources in social action churches as evidence that they are being faithful to the social mandates of the gospel and are thereby increasing in their effectiveness for Christ.⁴⁸ The meaning of the rise and fall of church membership should be interpreted with extreme care and is probably a precarious indicator of denominational faithfulness to God or lack of it. What can be said conclusively about declining membership is that more individuals, for whatever reasons are lost to the institutions to which they once belonged. Loss of members cannot be taken lightly for it means that the institution failed to communicate its vision, or failed to continue to meet the needs of its constituents, or both. Greenleaf's words that there is no ministry out there if there is not ministry in here should remind institutional leaders that educating the constituents is an integral part of the social change process. In this regard profitable dialogues between United Church leaders and Christian businessmen and businesswomen might ensue if the national church stressed the educational rather than the confrontational aspects of social

⁴⁸Robert K. Hudnut, Church Growth is Not the Point (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. IX.

ministry when dealing with its own members. The confrontation has now reached a point where a coalition of Christian businesspersons has emerged to counter the Church's official position on social issues.⁴⁹ The issues are sometimes lost in the process.

One of the most timely and crucial roles the United Church can play today is to genuinely embody justice and equity and regional sensitivity within its own structures. It has the opportunity to demonstrate a quality of unity which is deeply needed in Canada at this time. There is a heightened resistance to federalism in Canada today and a resurgence of the move toward decentralization and regionalism.⁵⁰ As the western provinces have become more economically solvent their political clout has grown considerably. The victory of the Parti Quebecois in Quebec has strengthened the resolve of French Canadians to maintain their language, their culture, and their right to economic self-determination. The awareness of native peoples that their way of life is in danger of extinction has increased apprehension and distrust. Even geographically Canada

⁴⁹W. Clarke MacDonald and Ronald C. Willoughby, "Church Speaks: Business Responds," and "Using One Church to Promote a One-sided Economic View." Observer (August 1978), 16-21.

⁵⁰Brian Brown, The New Confederation (Saanichton, B.C.: Hancock House, 1977)

is divided into vastly differing regions with differing heritages, economies, and languages. These differences can enhance and enrich the mosaic of Canadian culture or they can destroy it if they become increasingly polarized. The federal government is conducting multi-million dollar programs to try to keep the gaps from widening. However, federal programs are suspect regionally because they usually reduce the power of the provinces while increasing the power of the federal body. Programs sponsored by churches, schools, civic groups and service clubs such as exchange programs with other parts of the country tend to reduce this distrust, however and are generally accepted as non-partisan attempts to bring healing to the nation. In a nation like Canada every national church has an obligation to strengthen East-West and French-English understanding, and to seek to clarify those issues which lead to misunderstanding. The United Church because of its commitment to a cause even greater than nationalism; namely justice, has an opportunity to exemplify unity in diversity within its own corporate life and to work for that kind of goal within the nation. Canada must determine to seek justice and sustainability within the boundaries of its own borders as well as internationally. The national churches because of their perspective and liaison function can give leadership to this goal.

The national offices can also fulfil a servant leadership function by consciously and consistently breaking down the vertical images of church hierarchy. Perhaps no single task would bring more healing in the churches today. The animosity mentioned above with regard to regional feelings toward the federal government are quite similar to some of those feelings individuals and congregations have toward the national church. One way the United Church is seeking to bring healing is through establishing salary remuneration levels for national and conference staff which are comparable to those received by college and seminary professors and administrators, and not significantly higher than those received by parish clergy. Since two-thirds of the clergy of the United Church never receive a remuneration above minimum salary in their lifetime it would be more accurate to say that national and conference staff do receive substantially higher remuneration within the context of the religious professional community, but this differential is in no way comparable to the differential between administrators and teachers in education or executives in middle-management in industry. The minimally salaried pastor straight out of seminary is receiving approximately \$10,000 plus a manse and car allowance or the equivalent of \$12,000-\$15,000 depending on where he/she lives while a staff person with ten to twenty years experience and perhaps advanced

degrees is receiving approximately \$20,000 plus housing and car allowance or the equivalent of \$24,000 - \$30,000 depending on where he/she lives.⁵¹ Furthermore, General Council Executive recently set maximal limits on salary increases to higher paid staff while establishing an inverse scale of percentage increases: the lower down on the pay scale, the higher the percentage of increase.⁵² This means that all persons in national offices, lay and professional will increasingly share a more equitable income. When government and industry is continuing to widen the gap between lower paid staff and executive staff this move by the United Church is a most significant gesture.

Essentially, the chief task of the national church today is to restore trust and integrity to institutions. Society is increasingly dependent on giant, complex, institutions yet resents that very dependency. The individual loses significance in such a world and the results are lethargy and a kind of quiet despair. Those institutions therefore, which by their very nature recognize the dignity and value of the individual do two things: they become islands of hope for individuals, and they also imply that other institutions can be created or transformed to serve human needs.

⁵¹Chisholm, James A., Metropolitan Council, United Church of Canada, Vancouver, B.C.. Personal correspondence with the writer.

⁵²Ibid.

When the Anglican Church and the United Church recently chose to continue funding the World Council of Churches' Program to Combat Racism they did so in the face of critical publicity and the threat of loss of members and income. However, the integrity of these churches was at stake. It was a political act with value far beyond the small amount actually contributed by these Canadian churches. It said that some institutions still exist which believe that the cause of the black oppressed peoples of southern Africa is just and will be recognized and supported as such by these institutions. In a strange, paradoxical way what is implied in such a decision, perhaps more on the unconscious than the conscious level, is the realization that a church which cares there also cares here; while a church that chooses where and when and how and if it will care may not care for me. While the Church may not always be able to respond materially it can speak a word and let the world know it cares.

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Chapter 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In chapter one the writer sought to demonstrate that the primary crisis confronting humankind today is the establishment of a just and sustainable society. A just and sustainable society was defined as one characterized by fairness and equality in the distribution and use of the world's goods and resources by all the world's peoples in a manner congruent with an ecologically balanced technology. It also requires sensitivity to and preservation of those cultural and spiritual dimensions of life which make existence more than mere biological survival.

Society as currently constituted was shown to be neither just nor sustainable because the resources of the poorer nations actually diminish while wasteful consumption of goods and resources in the affluent nations increases. The problem therefore is not merely scarcity of life-sustaining resources but also an equitable distribution of such resources. This crisis is further complicated by current dominant forms of technology which, while professing solutions to technical issues, have in reality frequently produced problems greater than those they sought to remedy. Much current technology is actually detrimental to the earth and its peoples.

The role of the Church in such a situation was seen

to be one of educating for awareness, and of providing the theological and metaphysical constructs necessary to undergird a new understanding of humankind's relationships to nature. Humanity is part of nature, not over-against nature; and it is only as humankind aligns itself with ecological realities and the biblical mandate for justice that a just and sustainable society can emerge.

Chapter two contained a review of the Habitat Forum and some of the conclusions which emerged from it. Habitat revealed that the scale of the problems confronting humankind today are unprecedented in human history and therefore their resolution will necessitate new and innovative responses. Habitat revealed that there is an inter-relatedness between these global issues. It is no longer possible to pursue nationalistic, piecemeal solutions to problems which are international in scope and ramification. Habitat revealed that there is an organic relationship between the prosperity of the developed nations and the poverty of the underdeveloped nations. Current economic relationships and trade agreements insure that the affluent nations continue to profit at the expense of the poorer nations. Habitat also revealed that while technical and scientific solutions must continue to be pursued, the chief crisis before humankind today is a crisis of values. The nations of the earth lack the political will to make the

social and economic changes necessary to move toward justice and sustainability.

Chapter three discussed the implications of Habitat for the Church in North America and concluded that the current programs and priorities of the Church are incongruous with the most pressing needs of humanity today. Sociologically, the Church has so identified with the existing culture that it can be said to function as a civil religion, explicitly or implicitly reinforcing those values dominant in North American society and therefore overtly or covertly aligning itself not with the poor but with the powerful. This failure to demand justice for the poor and nurture for the earth has led to such a coalescence between the Church and government, industry, and education that to be a good Christian is usually considered synonymous with being a good citizen.

Furthermore, the Church has promulgated a theological understanding of humankind's relationship to nature which emphasizes the domination and manipulation of nature without due regard for the nurturing and renewing of nature. This distortion seems to have arisen from a world view which posits humanity over-against nature instead of one with nature. This construct also implies that nature has value only as it serves a utilitarian purpose for humankind. Such an anthropocentrism lends itself readily to the exploitation

of nature whenever and wherever humankind desires. The task of the Church therefore is to create a theology which emphasizes the unity of humanity with nature and the organic relationship between justice and human survival and injustice and technological disaster.

Chapter four described those corresponding imperatives or mandates which emerge for the Church in light of current global needs. Ironically, the Church in North America has not made the meeting of basic human needs a high priority. Perhaps this is because the survival needs of its own constituents have been adequately met, or perhaps this is because the Church has frequently conceived of its mission in other-worldly terms. In any case, what is required of the Church today is that it shift its emphasis to the concrete empirical realities of this world. Such a pragmatic approach to faith is firmly rooted in the scriptures themselves and is an obedient response to the biblical mandate to pursue justice and reconciliation. The Church can facilitate value changes within political and socio-economic structures as it embodies these changes within its own institutional life. The type of leadership required of the Church is a servant leadership: a leadership which is earned because of the quality of service and integrity it exhibits. Various modes of servant leadership described in the scriptures provide the criteria by which the Church can evaluate the quality

of its leadership.

Those values which are required of the Church to fulfill its mission in society are no less required of governments, industry, technology, and education. If these institutions are to provide a life-sustaining function in society then they also must begin to evaluate their programs and purposes by criteria other than gross national product, bureaucratic efficiency, and quantifiable measures of success. The Church's task is to enunciate and embody precisely these alternative criteria.

Chapter five suggested ways the Church could respond to this mandate for justice and sustainability. The Church has always expressed concern for social justice issues and for stewardship of the earth and its resources and peoples. However, these concerns have usually been relegated to peripheral and secondary areas of the Church's life. There are at least two reasons for this. Firstly, organized religion, like any other institution has given priority to its own survival. In such a context, programs which promote justice and sustainability, like missional ventures and social service enterprises of the past, are sometimes viewed as by-products of the Church's primary function and therefore supported only as surplus funds and personnel are available. Secondly, in its legitimate endeavor to bear witness to the reality that humankind's search for

meaning transcends materialism and acquisitiveness the Church has sometimes given the impression that genuine religion is indifferent to temporal concerns. The Church must sensitively and intelligently communicate that this search for meaning is not distinct from, but is rather an integral part of justice and stewardship.

The task before the Church, therefore, is to make primary in the future that which has been peripheral in the past; namely, to realize that justice and sustainability are not optional, but are rather central to its mission today.

Denominationally, this requires establishing new criteria for evaluating success other than those of increased membership and finances. It necessitates a critical appraisal of existing programs and priorities, determining to what extent these programs and priorities facilitate or impede a just and sustainable society. It may mean funding groups and movements which are non-ecclesiastical while simultaneously discounting support to traditional programs which have heretofore received ecclesiastical endorsement uncritically.

Educationally, this means that theological schools must review their curriculum and determine to what extent their training programs prepare ministers to be social animators in their role as institutional leaders. This

broader focus may require seminaries to provide opportunities for students to experience social change processes and to learn to reflect theologically in such encounters. It may also necessitate a shift in theological education away from a more formal academic approach and toward a more integrative balance between practical field experience and academic assignments.

Locally, this requires that each congregation review its expenses and priorities and become aware of what it is communicating explicitly and implicitly to its larger community through those programs which it supports and through those which it refuses to support. To the degree that the local congregation is willing to commit itself to such a critical self-appraisal, to that degree it will be able to determine how its local witness enables or inhibits justice and sustainability in the social order.

Finally, it requires that individual Christians make that personal response which demonstrates to their neighbors and fellow citizens their resolve to work for a just and sustainable global society. There is no substitute for personal response.

The thesis of this professional project was that a church membership adequately informed politically and theologically about pressing global issues would respond affirmatively toward a just and sustainable society. The

thesis has been substantiated in the sense that an increasing number of Christians are becoming aware that social justice issues and matters of ecological concern are not peripheral, but primary to the Church's mission. The thesis has been substantiated in the sense that denominational leaders and theological educators are aware that significant shifts are needed if ministry is to relate more effectively to the systems and structures of a technocratic age. The thesis has been substantiated in the sense that there is emerging a clearer line of demarcation between those values espoused by the Church and those dominant in society. The re-emergence of this value distinction enables the Church to offer an alternative value system which did not appear to exist when the line between Church and society was blurred. Changes within theology, denominational priorities, budget allocations, and local church programming indicate an increased awareness of global issues and a concern to discover that role which the Church can play in their resolution.

On the other hand there is evidence that interest in such matters remains almost exclusively the concern of the mainline churches, and these churches seem to have diminishing influence upon the political decision-making process. Furthermore, those religious groups which are thriving today preach and teach an apocalyptic eschatology

which actually reinforces an indifference towards the earth and interprets the plights of the poor as a form of divine judgment. Even in those denominations which express social concern, the methodology of response is so circumscribed by traditional and institutional expectations that innovative responses are often feared rather than encouraged. There is little evidence to indicate that the Church as currently constituted will significantly alter its present level of response toward global concerns. Quite frankly, the Church in North America does not see itself as an agent of social change. The spiritual impetus necessary to overcome this institutional inertia requires a second Pentecost. At Pentecost the disciples experienced a new reality and subsequently began to share their gifts, goods, and resources with those in need. Likewise, the need of the Church today is to experience a new reality, one which will enable us to once again share our gifts, goods, and resources with those in need. At Pentecost the disciples came to see themselves as the new Israel, that movement called into being to continue God's redemption ministry in the world. The Church shares precisely this mandate and can fulfill its calling by creating institutions of caring, and by providing prophetic interpretation for those groups, movements, and causes which it perceives as accomplishing God's purposes

in history for justice and preach and a sustainable future.

The hope of the future lies not so much in the Church as in the Lord of the Church who is constantly calling it to embody its mission, to be the alternative society toward which it points and for whose enabling it exists; and who is able to create new expressions of ministry whenever and wherever existing structures refuse to yield to the movement of the Spirit of Life.

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